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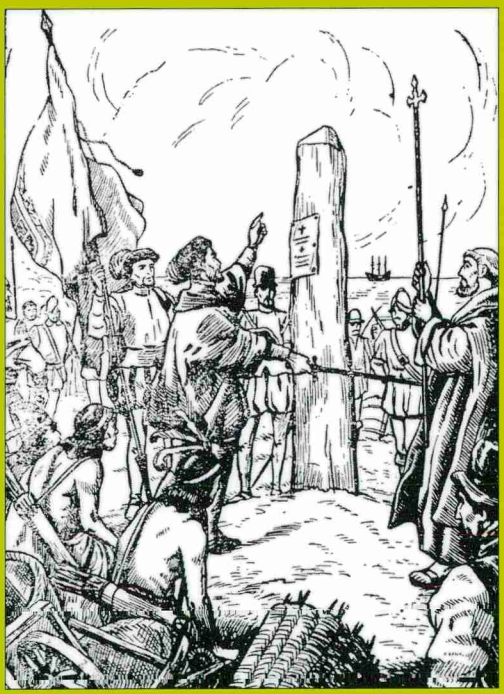

A Thematic Geography of its Development
Volume I

Jan M.G. Kleinpenning

Paraguay 1515-1870

Vol. 1

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Foreword

The writing of a historical geography of Uruguay during the period 1500-1915 inspired me to write a comparable study of Paraguay that would follow on from a book of that country during the years 1870-1932 that I published in 1992. The present thematic monograph on Paraguay in the period 1515-1870 is the concrete result of this inspiration, but even more of the prolonged efforts which followed it.

Important stimuli for writing this book were the fact that there existed a large amount of data in the voluminous literature on the history of Paraguay for a historical geographical monograph and the absence of a modern historical geography in summary form such as I had in mind, either in Spanish or in English. I therefore hope that, with this publication, I am not only satisfying my own interests, but also filling a gap and meeting a need.

The great majority of the publications on which this monograph was based were to be found in the very extensive library of the *Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut Preussischer Kulturbesitz* in Berlin. The director of the library and Paraguay scholar, Mr. Peter Altekrüger, who had already given me much support with earlier publications, was again particularly helpful in the compilation of the bibliography and the tracking down of a number of books and articles. A number of publications were also consulted in other libraries (see Bibliography).

The translation of the greater part of the Dutch manuscript was made possible by the generous financial support of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). The Faculty of Policy Studies of the Catholic University of Nijmegen enabled me to undertake the necessary study trips and also granted financial support for the preparation of the maps, a part of the translation and the publication of the book.

My dear daughter Petra was again prepared to draw nearly all the maps and figures and acquitted herself of this task in an

exemplary manner. I am very grateful to Mr. R.R. Symonds for the careful translation of the voluminous Dutch manuscript. I greatly appreciated the kind offer of the *Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut* to include the book in its *Bibliotheca Ibero-Americana* series and, lastly, I thank Dr. Peter Birle, Head of the Research Division of this Institute, for the work which this entailed.

Nijmegen, 13 February 2003
Jan M.G. Kleinpenning

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Sources: Album 1983:111-2; Blumers 1992:81-3 González Torres 1995:74-7; Nickson 1993:162,265-6,326,478. Errors and omissions in the sources made it necessary to combine them.

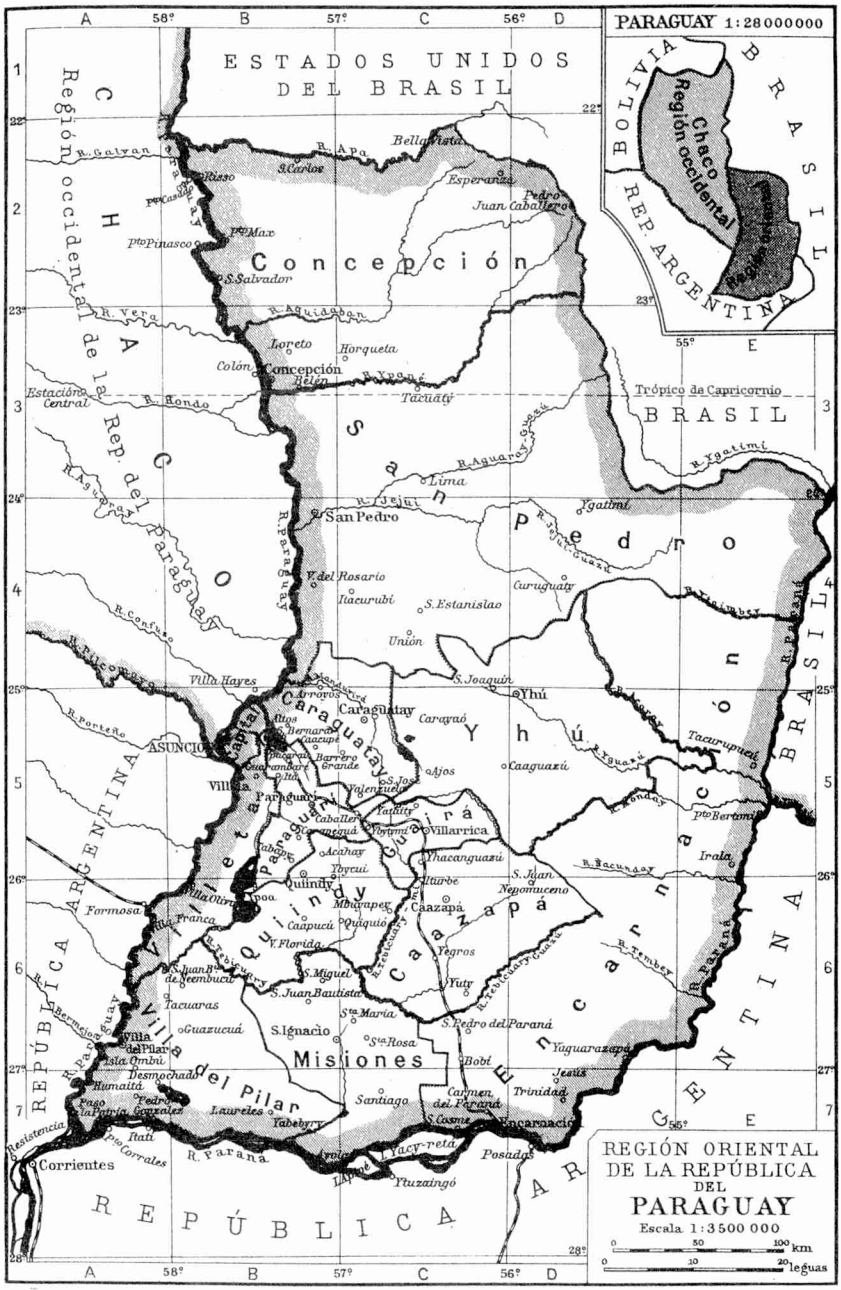

Fig. 0.1. Map of Eastern Paraguay (Schuster 1929).

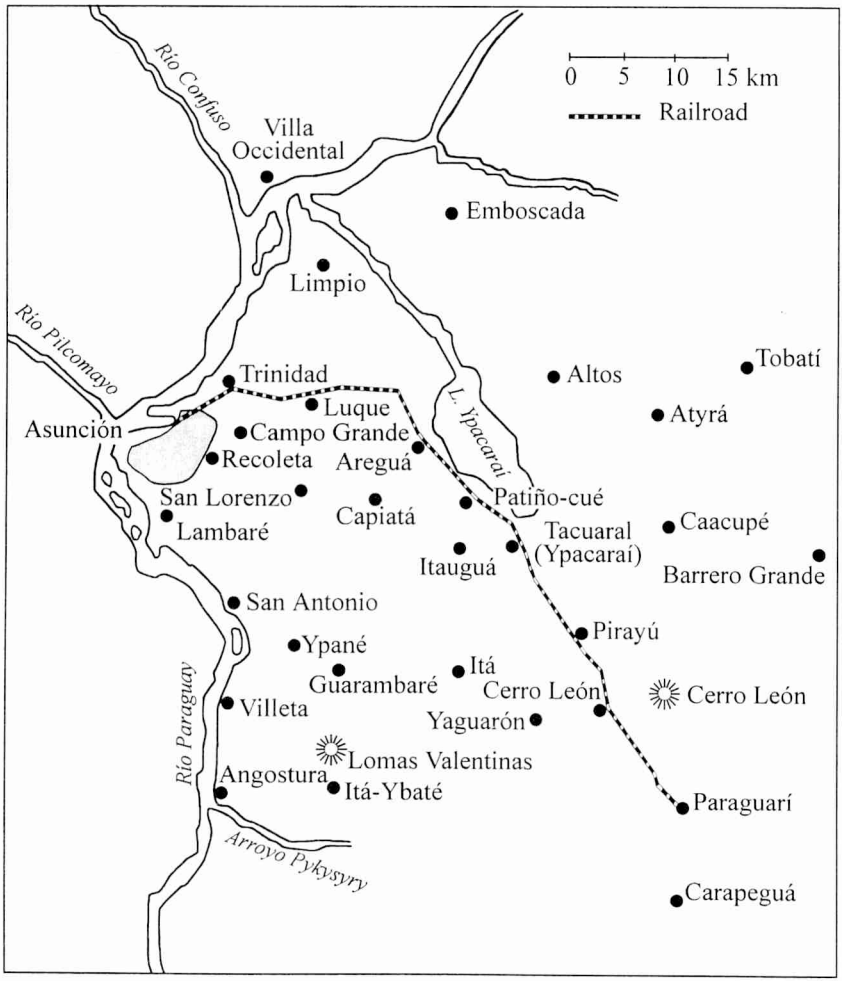

Fig. 0.2. Map of the Asunción area.

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Introduction

About history, human geography and historical geography

Historians immerse themselves in the past, partly because people are interested in the past, partly because the present can be better understood when they also have a knowledge of the past and, last but not least, because historical studies contribute to strengthening the self-awareness and sense of identity of peoples, regions and countries. The strengthening of national consciousness and national identity is particularly important for those countries which have become independent only relatively recently and so have had relatively little time to create a national image in relation both to themselves and the outside world. The countries of Latin America, which acquired their political independence at the beginning of the nineteenth century, too, were faced with the task of developing into national societies. In all these countries, the historiography of the past assisted in this, sometimes immediately after independence, but sometimes only later. An impressive number of historical studies has also appeared about Paraguay, the subject of this study. They have been written not only by national historians and other academics, but also to a lesser, but not unimportant, extent by foreigners. Some studies are restricted to certain specific aspects of the past and are limited to a short period, while others have a more holistic character and cover a longer period of time.

Not only historians, but also geographers, contribute to the knowledge of peoples, countries and regions and *their* studies can also strengthen the sense of identity and self-awareness. As far as the study of geography is concerned, the situation varies widely in

Latin America. In some countries, the study of geography is highly developed and there are chairs in the discipline at all the important universities, while in other countries, academic geography has been little developed, if at all. Geography is there sometimes more or less synonymous with knowledge of the topography or with cartography and map production and is regarded as the responsibility of the national topographic departments.

Paraguay is one of those countries where modern geographical study still has to find a place at the universities. As a result, the number of geographical studies that has so far appeared about this country is small, although this does not mean that the phenomena which geographers regard as relevant have not been studied at all. They have in part formed the subject of ecological, historical, economic, sociological, anthropological or other natural and social scientific publications, in which the phenomena concerned are generally studied differently, and from other perspectives, than if they had been studied by geographers.

The presence or absence of a modern academic study of geography has had repercussions on the development of historical geography, a subdiscipline of human geography, which shares much common ground with the discipline of history. It follows from the above that the study of historical geography in Paraguay has also remained 'underdeveloped', but here, too, the phenomena which historical geographers regard as relevant have certainly not been ignored. They have received attention - sometimes even generous attention - in the work of historians, but, in their work, the phenomena are generally discussed not from a geographical, but from a historical perspective.

The situation sketched here means that 'genuine' historical-geographical studies still scarcely exist for Paraguay, By 'genuine' historical-geographical studies I mean studies in which the phenomena that are regarded as forming the object of historical geography are described and explained by geographers, using the approach and methods which are characteristic of the discipline of geography.

This observation necessitates pausing for a moment to consider the essence of geography and, more in particular, that of modern human geography, of which historical geography forms a part.

Stated briefly, human geographers concern themselves with *man as inhabitant of the earth* and *the earth as the home of man*, with 'man' and 'earth' not being studied separately, but in their interrelationship. Human geography is concerned - in other words - with the relationship between man and nature, or rather, between human group and territory. If we attempt to define the study object of human geography rather more broadly, we can say that it is concerned with the description and explanation of: a) the manner in which human groups try to gain a livelihood on earth, in terms both of production and consumption, and the extent to which they are successful; b) the manner in which, and the extent to which, they use, arrange and transform their territory to this end; c) the spatial structures and processes which result from these activities; and d) the spatial diversity and the dynamic generated by them.

The majority of the regional and thematic subdisciplines of human geography are concerned with the present and the recent past. Even where they do pay attention to the more remote past, they often do so only because it can provide relevant background information for current phenomena and problems. In the subdiscipline of *historical geography,* however, the past occupies a central position. This subdiscipline studies the complexes of geographical phenomena of earlier times.

Historical geographers can direct their attention to a specific moment from the past and produce a geographical snapshot of it, or they can try to follow geographically relevant phenomena and complexes of phenomena over a longer period. In the latter case, it is mainly processes that are studied and the long-term dynamic becomes central.

Paraguay in the period 1515-1870 as an object of historical geography

This monograph is a historical-geographical study of Paraguay in the period 1515-1870. The year 1515 requires little explanation. It was the year in which the Spanish started to reconnoitre the la Plata region and in which the further colonisation of the area that would soon be designated as 'Paraguay' got under way, together with all the changes that this would bring about in the region. The end of the war with the Triple Alliance (Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay) - 1870 - forms an important turning point in the history of Paraguay

and has thus become a year that has so far been used by many historians as the starting or end point of their studies. It can also very well be used, however, as a limiting moment in a historical-geographical study such as this. Paraguay experienced such radical changes after 1870 that it was virtually reborn as a geographically new country. Another important turning point was 1811, the year in which the *intendencia del Paraguay* broke its ties with Spain and decided to continue henceforth as an independent nation. This was a particularly radical event politically, but the breaking of ties did not lead immediately to marked changes in the country's human geography as well. By no means everything remained unchanged, but nevertheless there was far more continuity than a strong dynamic towards change. This is why I consider that the year 1811 forms a less appropriate finishing point than 1870.[1] This will incidentally also become apparent in the arrangement of this study. I do not proceed by dealing first with the colonial period (1515-1811) and then examining the early post-colonial period (1811-70) in a completely separate part of the book, but always discuss the geographically significant developments for the period 1515-1870 as a whole.

The geography of Paraguay changed fundamentally during the period described in this monograph. In the Chaco, the area west of the Río Paraguay, which was inhabited by nomadic gatherers, hunters and fishers at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the changes remained relatively limited, since the Spanish had little success in initiating colonisation here.[2] Throughout the period the native population adopted a more or less hostile attitude towards the 'Spanish' population, which became dominant after 1537. In fact, however, the Chaco also had very little to offer this dominant population until 1870, certainly once it had become clear that this hot and dry territory provided a not very suitable corridor to Alto

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1 Another, less important, but more pragmatic, reason for taking 1870 as an endpoint is that I have made a detailed analysis of the period 1870-1932 in an earlier book (see Kleinpenning 1992).

2 Where reference is made to the Spanish in this study, it refers not only to the immigrants originating from Spain (*peninsulares*), but also to their Paraguayan-born descendants (Creoles) and to the mestizoes.

Perú. Such colonisation attempts as were made were limited to the area lying immediately west of the Río Paraguay. They were primarily undertaken with the intention of bringing part of the native population together into reductions or otherwise controlling them, so that they would give less trouble in the eastern region. Various forts were also built with that aim. None of this incidentally means that the life of the Chaco Indians remained totally undisturbed until 1870. They adopted certain things from the dominant population, thus changing their way of life, declined in numbers through repeated clashes and diseases and settled partly in other places.

The changes which occurred in the region east of the Río Paraguay were far more radical. Here Asunción was founded and at once started to function as capital of the province of Paraguay, quite soon becoming the basis of operations for the founding of other settlements. Many new settlements of varying size arose in Eastern Paraguay during the period up to 1870, founded partly by the Spanish, partly by Franciscans and Jesuits, or arising 'spontaneously'. The new settlements were created not only in order to bring Paraguay effectively under Spanish and, later, national control and so protect it against being taken over by the Portuguese, but also because the development of the various economic activities and the growth of the population made new settlements necessary. The settlements which were established by the missionaries were also partly established for those reasons, but they also served other purposes. They had to protect the Indians more effectively from exploitation by the Portuguese slave hunters and by the Spanish themselves, to pacify them sufficiently to make colonisation (including the harnessing of the native labour force) easier and to facilitate their conversion to the Christian faith. At the beginning of the colonial period there were only small semi-permanent Indian villages in the eastern region; by 1870, however, Eastern Paraguay had over a hundred *ciudades, villas and pueblos*.[3]

Arable farming was expanded in Eastern Paraguay after 1537; it assumed a more varied character and partly lost the simple rudimentary features that had characterised it in the pre-colonial period.

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[3] See the Glossary at the end of this book.

At the same time, however, completely new forms of livelihood developed, such as stockbreeding, shipbuilding and other craft activities, timber exploitation and the large-scale collection of yerba, which became Paraguay's principal trade and export product. Trade, traffic and transport increased in consequence.

It goes without saying that radical demographic changes also occurred. One has only to think of the decrease in the native population (especially in the earlier colonial period), of the incipient process of racial mixing, of the gradual growth of the 'Paraguayan' population, which largely came to consist of mestizoes and Creoles, and of the changes which occurred in the population distribution.

All these changes were accompanied by a renewed arrangement, use and transformation of the territory: not only were numerous new settlements founded, but also arable fields, pastures and roads were laid out, forests were cleared, trees planted etc. The final result was that the *Región Oriental* of 1870 had a completely different geography from that of the early sixteenth century.

The arrangement and approach of this study

The arrangement of this study is partly determined by the desire to present a geographical monograph and partly by the specific complexes of phenomena which have arisen in the study area.

In Part One, I first give - by way of an introduction - a brief outline of the main periods into which the history of Paraguay up to 1870 can be divided. I then define more clearly the area which is being treated in this book. This is necessary, because Paraguay has not always had the same borders, neither as a Spanish province, nor as an independent country. I then turn to a number of characteristics of the natural environment and to the population which inhabited Paraguay at the beginning of the sixteenth century. This is done partly in order to clear how and to what extent the Indian population had managed, by the beginning of the sixteenth century, to make a livelihood for itself in the region, within its natural possibilities and limitations. But it is also done because the natural characteristics and the existing native population helped to determine the activities of the Spanish who settled in the region from

1537. These not only offered them certain opportunities, but also imposed restrictions on them.

After the section on the 'Context', Part Two concentrates on the development of the settlement pattern. In other words, in Chapters 4 to 12, I address the question of how the Spanish as the dominant population after the *conquista* built rural and urban settlements in their territory in order to bring Paraguay under control as a colony and to build up a livelihood there. The nature of the settlement process also makes it necessary to examine the way in which the dominant population was supported by Franciscan, Jesuit and other missionaries. The chapters on settlement also provide a view of the new geographical structure which developed in colonial Paraguay as a consequence of the location and distribution of the settlements. Further changes occurred in the post-colonial period up to 1870, but these were relatively modest in comparison with the preceding period.

One essential condition for the manner and the extent to which forms of livelihood can be developed is the ease with which people have access to certain resources which can be used as production factors. In the predominantly rural Paraguay of before 1870, labour and land were the most essential production factors. Land was relatively abundant, labour less so and then only if the native population could be involved in the production process as much as possible. In Chapters 13 to 16 of Part Three, I examine how the dominant population succeeded in meeting its need for labour. I discuss not only the use of native labour, but also the deployment of Negro slaves and the presence and use of free labour. This section also deals with the organisation of labour in the native settlements established by the Franciscans and Jesuits. Chapters 17 and 18 discusses the rural ownership and occupation relationships which arose in the period up to 1870.

Proceeding from the geographically relevant question of the manner in which human groups gain a livelihood as inhabitants of the earth and the extent to which they are successful, I examine in Part Four the principal subsistence and commercially-oriented forms of livelihood developed by the dominant and the native population groups after 1537. Chapters 19 to 31 describe and explain the characteristics, importance and dynamic of arable farming, stock-

breeding, yerba collection, timber exploitation, small-scale industry, traffic, transport and trade.

The most important landscape changes affecting Paraguay up to 1870 are also dealt with. They form yet another aspect of the geographical study object that I have defined above as: 'the use, arrangement and transformation of the territory'. This theme is not discussed in a separate chapter, however, but has been integrated into the text of the chapters dealing with town and countryside.

Most of the human activities which are concerned with earning a livelihood result not only in particular spatial structures (i.e. the location of phenomena such as settlements in a specific space), but also set all kinds of processes into motion, which may or may not have a spatial dimension. One of the most important spatial processes is the distribution of the population and its associated dynamic. Population size, growth and distribution reflect, as it were, the human striving for prosperity in a particular area, even if these variables, in their turn, more or less condition that striving. In Part Five I explicitly examine this population growth and distribution.

A historical geography of colonial Paraguay would not be complete if it did not discuss the extensive and far-reaching missionary activities of the Jesuits during the period 1609-1768. These activities had a very specific character and took place in separate parts of Paraguay. There was even a strong separation of worlds, because the contacts between 'Spanish' Paraguay and 'las Misiones' were very restricted in many respects. Because of this separation, there is much to be said in favour of treating the missionary work of the Jesuits in a separate part of the book. I elected not to do this, however, but to discuss the geographically relevant aspects of their activities in the various thematic chapters. This approach has the advantage of enabling a more coherent picture to be drawn of the development of the settlement pattern, the use of resources, the principal forms of livelihood and the growth and distribution of the population. Another advantage of an 'integrated' treatment is that it also allows the parallels and differences between the 'world' of the Spanish and that of the Jesuit missions to be better brought out.

Geographers and, therefore, also historical geographers, often choose to adopt a *thematic* approach; in other words, they deal with *themes* that are thought to be geographically relevant. They explicit-

ly choose a *regional* approach, however, if it is primarily a question of studying larger or smaller *regions* geographically and setting out their findings in a regional monograph. In this study I have done both the former and the latter. I have given concrete content to the attempt to present a regional monograph - of Paraguay - by treating a number of important themes from a geographical perspective. Together, they are intended to offer a view of Paraguay as a unique historical-geographical region.

A thematic approach is not always satisfactory, because it often gives only an inadequate picture of the subregions into which a study area can be subdivided. I have therefore also tried in the thematic discussions always to pay attention - with the aid of maps and in other ways - to the spatial diversity. I also pay explicit attention - in Chapter 12 - to at least one very important spatial entity within the Paraguay of former days: the capital, Asunción.

The disadvantage of a historical-geographical study which emphasises the processes of development and change is that no adequate account is given of the effects (complexes of phenomena) to which these processes have led at a specific moment. What did Paraguay look like geographically in 1600, for example? To what extent did the picture differ in 1700? What did it look like in 1811, at the start of independence, and in 1864, at the beginning of the war with the Triple Alliance? In the concluding chapter, I will try to compensate somewhat for this lack of concrete time pictures by presenting some snapshots. They are intended at the same time as summaries and, as such, they link up with the remainder of the concluding chapter, in which I try to summarise and, to some extent, evaluate the effects of three and a half centuries of occupation history.

The magnitude which this study has finally attained may give the impression that Paraguay has been exhaustively discussed, but this is by no means the case. The present monograph is only a historical-geographical study, which means that numerous topics remain undiscussed.

I did not aim to write a general political history of Paraguay. In other words, this book is not a chronological account of the political developments and intrigues which took place in the Spanish colony and in the independent country of Paraguay up to 1870.

These political developments and intrigues are mentioned in passing - only where they are necessary for a proper understanding of the matters being discussed.[4] Unlike historical studies, relatively little attention is paid to the role played by individuals; they make an appearance only where they are of human-geographical significance.

Nor is this monograph a cultural-anthropological study. A detailed discussion of the material and spiritual culture of the various indigenous peoples and of the 'Paraguayan' population, and of the radical changes which have affected them in the course of time, would have become a study in itself and would have been difficult to combine with the human-geographical approach that has been adopted for this study.[5]

A third observation on the scope of this study is that it is actually not a monograph of the whole of Paraguay, even if this is suggested by the title, but of Eastern Paraguay (*Paraguay Oriental*), which is where the colonial and post-colonial developments and changes predominantly took place; Western Paraguay (*Paraguay Occidental*) - the Chaco - remained a periphery, the domain of nomadic groups of Indians who had not yet been brought under control or only inadequately so. In fact, the Chaco appears in this study only insofar as it had an effect on the developments in Eastern Paraguay.[6]

A fourth and final remark about the scope of this monograph is that I have not tried to give an exhaustive account of the work of the Jesuits, with all its associated backgrounds. That would have been impracticable within the compass of this study and would have led to the umpteenth description of their missionary work. Nor would it have been compatible with the aims and purpose of a historical-geographical monograph. The Jesuits inevitably appear in

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4 There are several general works which concentrate on politics and administration. See the Bibliography and the accompanying index at the end of this study.

5 For these aspects, see once again the Bibliography and, in particular, the publications of Branislava Susnik.

6 Using the keyword 'Chaco', the reader will find references to studies in the Bibliography which deal explicitly with West Paraguay, including a number of cultural-anthropological ones.

many places in this book and are consequently treated in considerable overall detail, but nevertheless only to the extent that they have been significant actors in the 'geography' of Paraguay.[7]

What the reader further needs to know

The sources used for this study are virtually all 'secondary'. I did not undertake any archival research. In view of the breadth of the subject and the time span that I wished to cover, that would have been impractical. Moreover, it was not really necessary, because a great deal of archival material has already been made accessible, thanks to the research of historians. My work is therefore based on existing publications. These are predominantly publications by historians and are therefore not always wholly relevant for geographers. They are, in other words, sources from which the geographically relevant material had to be selected and then reworked in such a manner that the stated goal could be achieved: a historical-geographical monograph of (Eastern) Paraguay during the period 1515-1870.

The literature used is listed in the Bibliography at the end of this book. Because of the large number of titles, it is provided with an index, which can be used to discover fairly easily which publications are of particular relevance to a particular subject. All the publications listed were consulted, but not all were used equally intensively. Their use value varied widely. Moreover, the 'law of diminishing returns' came increasingly into play as the number of

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[7] A very extensive oeuvre has been created in the course of time about the Jesuits and their work in Paraguay (and other parts of Spanish and Portuguese America), consisting of many hundreds of books and articles, which have been published in all the major modern languages. No end is yet in sight of this stream of publications. The Bibliography contains only those titles which seemed to be the most relevant to this historical-geographical study. Nevertheless, the titles selected represent a substantial part of the total Bibliography. Selective use has been made of these sources, partly because there proved to be many overlaps. Anyone wishing to know more about the missionary work of the fathers, the reasons for the banning of the Order in around 1760 and other matters, should consult the Bibliography, using the keywords 'Jesuits' and 'Jesuit missions'.

sources increased. That was particularly the case with a subject about which so much has been written - the work of the Jesuits.

The sources consulted also provided statistical information. I decided to include the available - often scarce - statistical material in detail in this study, partly in the form of tables which have been integrated into the text, partly in the form of Appendices. In so doing, I have tried to correct inaccuracies in the reproduction of the data by comparing several sources, but have unfortunately not always succeeded in removing all the inconsistencies. Where this proved impossible, this has been mentioned.

The geographical names from the text are to be found on the various maps, except for those names which are so generally known that localisation appeared unnecessary. Where the less well-known geographical names do not appear on the maps, the location is specified in the text. In other instances (e.g. for areas outside Paraguay), the use of an atlas is recommended.

Lastly, it should be said that the text has been written in such a way that readers not to have to work through the whole book. They may limit themselves to the parts which they consider to be of the most interest. In other words, the book may also be used as a handbook. This is why I have sometimes deliberately repeated things. The indexes are intended to facilitate the use of the book as such.

PART ONE

THE GENERAL CONTEXT

2

Paraguay up to 1870: a first acquaintance

This chapter gives a global sketch of the developments in Paraguay during the period 1515-1870. The purpose of this chapter is to familiarise the reader with the Spanish province, later country, of Paraguay that forms the subject of this study. I shall also discuss a number of important political events which occurred in Paraguay. Although the political history lies outside the scope of this human-geographical study, it cannot be wholly ignored, because it provides indispensable background information which enables a number of matters which are discussed in this monograph to be better understood.

Three major periods can be distinguished on the basis of the most important political developments up to 1870: the colonial period which lasted until 1811, the period of the dictator José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia (1814-40) and those of the presidents Carlos Antonio and Francisco Solano López (up to 1870). These periods will be discussed in turn.[1]

Paraguay until about 1700

The colonial period, which lasted nearly three centuries, can be further subdivided into a number of sub-periods. After the preliminary reconnaissances of the la Plata region and the foundation of

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[1] The literature references in this chapter are more limited than in the remaining part of this book, because this first general presentation is partly based on sections from the following chapters.

Asunción, the Spanish occupation was initially restricted to the area in the immediate vicinity of the capital. The European population was very small, which meant that there was no manpower to get further colonisation properly under way. The period of the *conquista* was more or less at an end by 1555. Asunción had by then been consolidated as a permanent Spanish settlement, the *conquistadores* had abandoned the idea that the 'Sierra de la Plata' (Alto Perú) could best be reached from Paraguay and had decided to make a livelihood for themselves on the spot in agriculture and other occupations. The city soon started to serve as a base for the establishment of a number of new settlements. Urban support points arose along the Río de la Plata and Río Paraná, a few settlements in el Guairá (the area east of the Alto Paraná), el Itatín (North Paraguay, now southern Mato Grosso) and even in the far west, in what is now Bolivian territory (Fig. 5.1). After this period of expansion, during which colonisation incidentally remained very patchy in character, there followed a period of contraction after 1630. The province of Paraguay was then already considerably smaller than a century before, partly because the la Plata region had been made a separate province. After 1630, the Spanish had to surrender the settlements in el Guairá and el Itatín and, after 1675, they were also forced to withdraw from the area north of the Río Manduvirá. In around 1700, the region occupied by the Spanish was in fact largely limited to a small area around Asunción. The region south of the Río Tebicuary, the catchment area of the Río Paraná and the Río Uruguay, then formed a world apart, where the Jesuits developed an increasing missionary activity after 1610 and succeeded in establishing a few dozen settlements.

The colony's economy at that time was still almost wholly agricultural. People lived on what small-scale arable and livestock farming produced for them; yerba mate was the only important commercial product. The level of economic development remained low. There was very little metal money in circulation; the region's products served at the same time as trading goods and as currency. The colony enjoyed very little interest from the mother country and had to rely on its own resources when it came to defending the occupied territory against the aggressive expansion of the Portuguese and the attacks of predatory Chaco Indians. In fact, this

permanent state of defence placed a heavy burden on the inhabitants. The population remained small throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, because there was very little immigration after 1570 and the indigenous population declined steeply. In 1682, the province of Paraguay (excluding the Chaco) had no more than 38,666 inhabitants, including no fewer than 19,070 Indians, who lived in seven Jesuit mission villages. The non-Indian population at that time incidentally consisted almost wholly of mestizoes and Creoles. The colony was certainly not very prosperous, despite the fact that part of the indigenous population was forced to work for the dominant population. The social contrasts were relatively small.

There were political tensions, but these were not immediately alarming. One of the principal outbursts of political unrest occurred in the period 1640-50; it is discussed below in connection with the political turmoil which occurred about a century later.

Political unrest in the eighteenth century: the struggle against the Jesuits

The eighteenth century was a period of greater unrest and change. Between 1717 and 1735 order in the colony was disturbed by the *Revolución de los Comuneros*. This revolution largely arose from the discontent among the Spanish population at the dominant position which the Jesuits had gained at that time. The conflict was sufficiently significant to justify devoting somewhat greater attention to it.

The Jesuits were able to enjoy the support and the sympathy of the Spanish Crown for about 150 years after their arrival in 1609 and consequently succeeded in gaining various important privileges in the course of the seventeenth century which assisted their missionary work. Relations between the missionaries and the civil population and, sometimes, also the civil authorities of Paraguay were considerably less favourable. The Spanish élite were openly hostile towards the Jesuits and the sympathy of the governors varied; some of them adopted a positive or neutral attitude, while others did not conceal their antipathy. Any governor who too openly chose the side of the Jesuits ran the risk of losing the support of the civil

population. The first tensions arose very soon after 1610, when the Jesuits began to establish various mission villages in el Guairá, thus depriving the *vecinos* of the Spanish settlements which had been established there (Ciudad Real and Villa Rica) of the possibility of subordinating the local Guaraní Indians unchecked to their interests. The conflicts of interest subsequently only increased, particularly in the eighteenth century. The annoyance of the frustrated colonists and *encomenderos* resulted as early as 1612 in them driving the fathers from their *Colegio* in Asunción, impotent as they were to remove them also from the reductions and from Paraguay. In 1649, 1724 and 1732 the fathers would again be expelled from Asunción.[2]

The mission villages which were eventually established in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century south of the Río Tebicuary and near the Río Paraná and the Río Uruguay, became *de facto* increasingly a 'province within the province', a 'foreign body'. They were not only economically self-sufficient, but also largely autonomous administratively. The Creoles, mestizoes and clergy who did not belong to the Jesuit Order had to obtain permission from the provincial prior to enter the territory of the mission province and were generally allowed to remain for no more than three days in the mission villages. The governors and bishops seldom visited the territory and then not always willingly; traders and other travellers were sometimes forced to make difficult detours through morasses and forests, because more direct connections through the mission territory were not always possible. The Order adhered fully to Spanish law, but did not always feel obliged to adhere to the instructions and wishes of the bishops; the fathers, in fact, regarded only the provincial prior and the Pope as persons of whom they really had to take account. Thanks to the officially sanctioned possession of firearms and the presence of defence works (such as palisades and moats) around threatened villages, the missionaries were increasingly able to defend their settlements successfully against the external aggression of the Portuguese, who

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[2] Meliá Lliteras 1991:220.

tried to enslave the Indians. The settlements were regarded by the Spanish as bulwarks and the mission territory as a whole developed into an enclave which existed for nearly 150 years.

The real bone of contention for the civil élite and certain authorities, however, lay not in the independent and isolated existence of the settlements, but in the economic power and the relative prosperity which the Jesuits gradually built up in their very efficiently organised mission villages. While the population of the much shrunken civil province of Paraguay led a far from easy existence at the end of the seventeenth century, because it had continually to defend itself against the attacks of Chaco Indians, to check the Portuguese urge for expansion and pay high taxes (especially on yerba), the mission villages of the Jesuits - as they saw it - flourished. According to Blas Garay, quoting Ibañez (see below), the Jesuits realised an annual *utilidad líquida* of a million *pesos*, while the civil province led a sickly existence. The low level of prosperity, not to say poverty, and the economic stagnation of the civil population of Paraguay, soon came to be seen as the consequence of the competition which the province had to endure from the Jesuits.

The Jesuits - according to the 'Spanish' - monopolised south of the Río Tebicuary an area with rich natural resources in the form of first-class grazing lands, arable fields, forests and *yerbales*. North of the river they possessed in various places extensive areas of good agricultural land which they used to support the operations of the Order in Paraguay. The common view was that if they were prepared to lease out parts of it, they made the tenants pay a good price for it. The Order had acquired its property through gifts or purchase in the course of time, but often with the consequence that the occupiers were forced to leave. The (incidentally baseless) rumours about the presence of rich mines in 'Jesuit territory' only added fuel to the fire.

Another source of annoyance was that the Jesuits had succeeded in withdrawing a large and growing proportion of the Indian population from the influence of the Spanish, because they had brought these Indians together in their mission villages. They had made an arrangement by which the villages were not obliged to meet their tribute obligations by supplying free labour to the Spanish élite, but

paid tax directly to the Crown instead, and succeeded in having the Indians exempted from payment for a considerable time. This meant, in fact, that it was not the Spanish, but the Jesuits who could - and actually did - use the Indian population as labour for subsistence arable and livestock farming, yerba production, church building etc. There was more at issue, however: the Jesuits opposed the *encomienda de servicios personales* (performing personal services for the Spanish) and had openly criticised the existence of this institution from the time of their arrival in Paraguay. In other words, the Jesuits criticised an important source of 'income' of part of the Spanish population. The increasing integration of natives in special mission villages occurred at the same time as that in which the number of natives in 'Spanish' Paraguay was rapidly declining as a result of the high mortality and intermarriage, which only increased the discontent among the Spanish.

Apart from competition for access to land and the use of labour, there was also competition in the market, especially the international yerba market, from the moment (1645) that the Jesuits obtained permission for the missions to deal regularly in yerba. In a short time they built up an international trading network and captured part of the market. The yerba produced by the Spanish was subject to various taxes, while the Jesuits managed to obtain exemptions and supplied a good part of the foreign market using their own transport. On the foreign markets, the yerba was generally not offered at considerably lower prices, but at current prices, which meant that the villages made more profit than the civil traders. The Jesuits were also regarded as competitors in the export of cotton textiles and other products. Their *Colegio* in Asunción was not only an administrative centre and educational institution, but also served as a goods depot.

The Spanish élite in fact had little sympathy for the Jesuits. Even if they were in difficulties, e.g. because they were being attacked by the Portuguese, they were not always offered support; there was incidentally also no further need for this in the course of time. Apart from its lack of sympathy for the Jesuits, the top layer of the civil population also soon had little sympathy for all the bishops, governors and lower authorities who were sympathetic towards the Order or were suspected of being more or less sympa-

thetic towards the missionaries and their work. By contrast, any spiritual or civil authority which openly distanced itself from the Jesuits was popular amongst the Spanish.

According to Kahle, the missions developed so differently from the Spanish province that peaceful coexistence was scarcely possible.[3] The differences led to the first open explosion by as early as 1642. In that year the Franciscan Bernardino de Cárdenas was appointed bishop of Asunción.[4] He revealed himself to be an enemy of the Jesuits and a sympathiser with the *encomenderos*. This brought him into conflict with Governor Gregorio de Hinestrosa, who was favourably disposed towards the Jesuits.[5] After Cárdenas had tried to close the *Colegio* of the Order in Asunción, he was banished from Asunción by the governor. In 1649 he made use of the absence of the governor, Diego Escobar Osorio, to return to Asunción; he took over the governorship, accused the Jesuits of illegal practices and tried to force them to leave Paraguay. However, an army of Spaniards and mission Indians, led by Governor Sebastián de León y Zárate, defeated him in the battle of San Fernando in 1650 and forced him to flee to Bolivia. The Jesuits were restored to their position, but the complaints that had been made against them continued to poison the atmosphere from time to time and would be used by the Portuguese statesman, Pombal, a century later in order to renew the struggle against the Order (see below).[6]

Far more serious than the action of bishop Cárdenas was the conflict that began in 1717 and lasted until 1735: the *Revolución de los Comuneros*. The province of Paraguay was governed in 1717 by Diego de los Reyes Balmaceda, who was sympathetic towards the Jesuits. His predecessor, Bazán, had concluded a treaty of peace and friendship with the Payaguáes south of Asunción in 1714 in

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3 Kahle 1984:113.

4 See Priewasser 2000 for a detailed biography of this bishop.

5 See page 22 *et seq.* for a chronological list of the governors who ruled Paraguay during the colonial period.

6 For the foregoing about the Jesuits and Cárdenas, see: Benítez 1985:131-4: Cardozo 1991:132-4; Cardozo 1994:35; Nickson 1993:95; Spangenberg 1992:13; Ugarte Centurión 1983:69-70.

order to curtail their piracy, but Reyes Balmaceda considered that these Indians were still causing too much trouble and decided, partly on the advice of certain Jesuit fathers, to organise a punishment expedition against them in February 1717. The *encomenderos* feared that such an expedition would incite the Indians to declare open war and were little inclined to support the military operation. They were even less pleased with the fact that some 70 Indians who had been taken prisoner had been sent to the Jesuit villages instead of being made available to the Spanish as serfs (*yanaconas*). There were further frictions between Reyes Balmaceda and the more prosperous Paraguayans over a discriminatory tax which he wished to impose on the colony to finance the erection of two forts. Reyes Balmaceda was also accused of trying to enrich himself in his position as governor, which was indeed true. A number of leading Creoles lodged a complaint at the *audiencia* of Charcas, which resulted in the colonial authorities sending José de Antequera y Castro to Paraguay to investigate the accusations against the governor.

In 1721 Antequera imprisoned Governor Reyes Balmaceda and took over the administration himself, managing to stay in power until 1725. He let it be known that his sympathy lay with the *encomenderos* and put them up to resist the repeated attempts made by the Jesuits between 1721 and 1724 to restore Reyes Balmaceda to power. In April 1722 the missionaries engineered the escape of Reyes Balmaceda from Asunción to Buenos Aires. On his first attempt to return to Paraguay a few months later, his claim that he was the legitimate governor of the province was honoured in Candelaria. Antequera responded to this challenge by sending a force of 600 soldiers to the Jesuit missions in September 1722. This action forced Reyes Balmaceda to withdraw. Fresh attempts were made to restore Reyes Balmaceda to power in August and December 1723 and in January 1724, but these failed.

In July 1724 a new phase opened in the unrest. The tensions deteriorated into an armed conflict when the lieutenant-governor of Buenos Aires, Baltasar García Ros, an ally of the Jesuits and a friend of Reyes Balmaceda, organised a royalist army of 2,000 mission Indians to crush the resistance of the Spanish élite. In response, the rebels organised an open *cabildo* (municipal assem-

bly) in Asunción on 22 July 1724, which decided to take punitive measures against the Jesuits. The *Colegio* of the Order in Asunción was closed and the Order's properties in and around Asunción were confiscated. But it was also decided to take military action. The *cabildo* assembled an army of some 3,000 men, which was placed under the command of Antequera. The troops marched south and managed to defeat García Ros' royalist troops (largely mission Indians) near the Río Tebicuary on 24 August 1724. After their victory, the rebels organised a punishment expedition against the mission villages on the other side of the river. In 1725, however, the roles were reversed. Royalist troops, again largely composed of mission Indians and led this time by the governor of the la Plata province, Bruno Mauricio de Zavala, succeeded in reaching Asunción on the orders of the viceroy at Lima in order to force Antequera to return to Lima. Antequera and his Paraguayan companion Juan de Mena were there accused of treason and executed in 1731.

After a brief pause in the conflict, the rebellion broke out again in 1730. At the time the political power in Asunción was being temporarily exercised not by the *cabildo*, but by a series of collective decision-making bodies, variously called *Señoría del Común* and the *Junta Gubernativa*. In 1731 the newly appointed governor, Ignacio de Soroeta, was prevented from coming to Asunción by a militia of *Comuneros*. In September 1733 rebellious troops again succeeded in defeating the royalist troops in a battle at Guaya-Ibiti. The royalists were led this time by another newly appointed governor, Manuel Agustín de Ruiloba y Calderón. The latter was killed during the battle.

Not until January 1735 did the royalist troops, who had marched from Buenos Aires on the orders of the viceroy in Lima and were again led by Bruno Mauricio de Zavala, manage finally to defeat the *Comuneros* forces (battle of Tavapy). The royalists were supported by some 8,000 mission Indians. Remnants of the *Comuneros* army were defeated at the Río Tebicuary by an army of mission Indians, led by the new governor, Martín José de Echauri. The last important leader of the *Comuneros*, Fernando de Mompox y Zayas, fled to Brazil. The rebellion was over and peace returned. The Jesuits reoccupied their *Colegio* in Asunción and Zavala returned to his Buenos Aires base in 1736.

As the revolution continued, it was no longer only a question of the Jesuits' economic power, but also of regional autonomy and the defence of public liberties versus the centralist absolutism of the viceroy in Lima, and the rebellion also assumed a political character.[7] The revolution has been interpreted by historians in different ways. Some historians see the *Revolución de los Comuneros* as a product of the Enlightenment and as an early - the first - expression of the striving of the colonial population for independence. Others see it as an isolated event, that was explained mainly by economic factors (competition for labour). Saeger saw the revolution as a sequel to the rising that had been instigated by Bernardino de Cárdenas in the 1640s. In his view, the *Revolución de los Comuneros* had a unique character and was therefore not comparable with other revolutions in South America; it was in fact no more than a local rebellion which arose from a threat to the vested interests of a particular local group. Nickson has remarked that, in a more complex interpretation, two stages can be distinguished in the rebellion: an initial phase, in which the opposition was led by *encomenderos* who mainly wanted to fight out an economic conflict with the missionaries, and a second, more radical, phase when the movement became more a cause of the lower social classes who were directly challenging the colonial authority.

In 1747, Juan José de Vargas Machuca made a final unsuccessful attempt to rekindle the rebellion. Governor Rafael de la Moneda, however, managed to frustrate the conspiracy and enabled Vargas Machuca to escape.

After 1735, various penalties were imposed on the rebellious province. The *Real Provisión* of 12 September 1537, which had been promulgated by Charles V, was revoked. This *Provisión* allowed the *conquistadores* to appoint a new governor themselves, if the position became vacant. This was a privilege that had been used more than once. Moreover, all exports from Paraguay were subjected to heavier duties at the port of Santa Fe than in the period before (see Chapter 30).

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[7] Spangenberg 1992:15, who bases himself here on Sánchez Quell.

Partly thanks to these measures, rest was restored, but the downside was that the mother country did not become more well-liked among the Spanish population of Paraguay. Sympathy towards the Jesuits obviously also became less, rather than greater, after the rebellion. The feelings towards the mother country would advance the struggle for independence at a later stage.[8]

After the *Revolución de los Comuneros* had ended, the Jesuits enjoyed a period of some 15 years of rest. From 1750, however, fresh complications arose which, although they took place outside Paraguay proper, nevertheless had important consequences for the existence of the Order.

The tensions occurred this time between the missionaries and the Indians of seven settlements entrusted to them, on the one hand, and the Spanish and Portuguese colonial authorities, on the other. The cause of the tensions was the fact that, under the Treaty of Madrid (1750), Spain exchanged the fortified Portuguese settlement of Colonia do Sacramento (in the Banda Oriental, opposite Buenos Aires) for territory situated farther to the north, west of the Tordesillas line separating the Spanish and Portuguese spheres of influence (see Chapter 3). This *Tratado de Permuta* implied that the seven mission villages situated east of the Río Uruguay, became Portuguese territory. The villages concerned were San Nicolás, San Luis, San Lorenzo, San Miguel, San Juan, Santo Ángel and San Borja (known as the *misiones orientales*; see Fig. 8.1). The Indians living there had to leave the area and settle in Spanish territory. They were not prepared to do so and the Jesuits also protested against the decision. They thought that it would be impossible to accommodate about 30,000 Indians elsewhere in a short time. Moreover, if the missionaries and the natives left the villages, they would be allowed to take only their movable property with them and would have to leave all the rest behind. Besides various material amenities, the villages possessed good arable land, first class *yerbales* and extensive grazing land with large herds of cattle,

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[8] For the *Revolución de los Comuneros,* see particularly the publications of Estrada 1899,I:283-475, López 1976 and Saeger 1972; plus, *inter alia,* Benítez 1985:134-46; Cardozo 1991:175-82; Cardozo 1994:39-43; Ministerio 1987:41-3; Nickson 1993:147-9; Vittone: 1966:8-15.

horses and mules. The Jesuits became divided between pacifists and militants. Under the influence of the latter, several villages went into opposition and eventually an all-out war broke out, the *Guerra Guaranítica* (1754-56), a mass rising of the Indians from the seven villages against the unwanted changes. The inhabitants of the mission villages were eventually called to order by a combined Spanish and Portuguese military force. After various minor skirmishes the rebellious Indians were defeated by the Spanish-Portuguese coalition in the battle of Caaybaté in February 1756. A total of 1,511 Guaraníes were killed while, in the other camp, only five whites perished. In 1761, it was decided in the Treaty of el Pardo, under the rule of Carlos III, to annul the arrangements of 1750, dating from the time of Ferdinand VI, and to return to the situation prevailing before that date.[9] The Indians received back their territory and their possessions, or at least what remained of them, because much had been destroyed and disappeared during the Portuguese occupation. It is difficult to say to what extent the restoration of the *status quo ante* was due to diplomacy, although it is a fact that the Jesuits repeatedly tried after 1750, through contacts with the Spanish Court, to have the *Tratado de Permuta* annulled.

What is of prime importance here is that the reputation of the Jesuits was considerably damaged. They were suspected of direct involvement in the Indian resistance. According to Fassbinder (citing Hafkenscheid), this was not the case, but according to Kahle, recent research indicates that they were involved. Some of the fathers were said to have prepared and supported the resistance; they supplied gunpowder, distributed arms, helped in the manufacture of wooden cannon etc. Whatever the merits of the case, the missionaries made themselves suspect and dissipated some of their goodwill with the Spanish and Portuguese Crown. Moreover, they had lost the trust of part of the Indian population, who felt themselves not only betrayed by the Spanish king (whom they had

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[9] For this annulment, see Mateos 1949 and 1954.

served and respected as true vassals), but also more or less left in the lurch by at least some of the Jesuits.[10]

The consequences became apparent in 1756, when the Portuguese minister, Sebastián José de Carvalho e Mello (better known as the Marquis of Pombal), published a critical brochure about the Jesuits.[11] The brochure of no more than 85 pages received an incredibly wide distribution; 20,000 copies were circulated in Portugal and, in addition, it was translated into Italian (1757), French (1758) and German (1758, 1760). In it, Pombal accused the Order of all kinds of things of which bishop Cárdenas had already accused the Paraguayan Jesuits more than a century earlier, including lese-majesty, wishing to proclaim a sovereign state and the illegal practice of trade. All the accusations were, in fact, unfounded. The desire to proclaim an independent state, for example, was pure invention. Although the Jesuit missions enjoyed a large measure of independence, this independence had been allowed them by the Spanish kings. In exercising it, they adhered strictly to Spanish law and regarded the Indians entrusted to them as Spanish subjects. The accusations nevertheless undermined the Order's prestige. There was also criticism from others in Europe, including the freemasons in France and England. Another brochure which was published in São Paulo in the same year (1756) accused the Jesuits of wishing to establish their own state and referred to a Nicolás I, the king of Paraguay and emperor of the *Mamelucos*. The brochure was pinned onto the Jesuits, but was in reality also a product of Pombal or one of his sympathisers.[12]

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[10] For the *Guerra Guaranítica*, see, *inter alia*, Benítez 1985:150-3; Fassbinder 1926:136-9; Kahle 1992:31-2; Meier 1990:72-3; Meliá Lliteras 1991:226.

[11] The full title read '*Relação abbreviada da republica, que os religosos jesuitas das provincias de Portugal, e Hespanha, estabelecerao nos dominios ultramarinas das duas monarchias, e da guerra, que nelles tem movido, e sustenado contra os exercitos hespanhoes e portuguezes; formada pelos registos das secretarias dos dous respectivos principaes comissarios, e plenipotenciarios; e por outros documentos autenticos*' (Jones 1979:91).

[12] The title was *Histoire de Nicolas I, roy du Paraguai, et empereur des Mamelus*. São Paulo:1756. 117 pp. (Jones 1979:79). The imprint was fictitious.

Someone who - certainly in view of his somewhat obscure existence - made a disproportionately large contribution to the eventual fall of the Jesuits was Bernardo Ibáñez de Echavarri.[13] This person had been a member of the Jesuit Order, but was twice expelled from it. His most important 'service' was that he summarised the rather disconnected picture of the Jesuits into a comprehensive whole. He did this in a venomous critical work entitled *Reyno jesuítico del Paraguay*. The text was at first preserved by the Spanish Crown as a manuscript with the same care as that with which it preserved other important state papers, and subsequently the account was published. It was first published, in several volumes, between the expulsion from Paraguay in 1768 and the complete abolition of the Order in 1773.[14] According to Ford Bacigalupo, Ibáñez was probably also the author of another book directed against the Jesuits entitled *Causa jesuítica de Portugal*.

Ibañez' work was harmful, not so much because he published so many new facts, but much more because he made extensive use of alleged first-hand documentation to 'prove' his arguments. Ibáñez' sources were by no means all reliable and his interpretation of them was pretty subjective, but because he included so much documentation in his book - whether legitimate or spurious - he gave the impression of being an expert. In this he had the advantage that he had lived in las Misiones and Buenos Aires during the period 1755-61, i.e. at the time of the *Guerra Guaranítica* and immediately afterwards. This had perhaps made him very frustrated. One of his accusations was that the Jesuits governed las Misiones as a sovereign state, employing methods like those of every larger European crown. Ibáñez also alleged that the Jesuits enjoyed an income of more than one million silver *pesos* per year from the labour of the Indians and yet paid only about 20,000 *pesos* in taxes and expenses. They had their own army and included many foreign priests, which were other indications of their plans to proclaim their own state. Ibáñez made many other accusations and recommended that the Order should be expelled. Whatever may have been the value of his information, the fact remains that his work came over very convincingly and so contributed in a high degree to the negative public opinion already existing at that time of the Order in Europe. The ultimate goal of critics like Ibáñez was to involve others,

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[13] See, for his ideas and writings, the article by Ford Bacigalupo 1979.

[14] The work was published in 1770 in Italian in Lisbon, in 1771 in French in Madrid, in 1774 and 1783 in German in Cologne and Frankfurt/Leipzig, respectively. In 1780 it was published again in French, but then in Amsterdam and Leipzig. Some editions were more extensive than others (Jones 1979:87).

including bishops and the pope, in the opposition to the Order. The latter succeeded.

In 1759 Pombal ordered the Jesuits to leave Portugal and its overseas territories. In 1764 the Order was also forced to cease its activities in France and the French colonies. In 1767, the sympathy for the Order at the Spanish court had also reached rock bottom and Carlos III decreed on 27 March that the Jesuits were to leave Spain and the Spanish colonies. He gave as his only argument that their departure was necessary because of the maintenance of public order.[15] The accusations made by Ibáñez were used at that time to justify the expulsion.

457 Jesuits were banished from the whole of the la Plata region and shipped to Europe. The figure for the whole of Spanish America was over 2,200 and, together with those expelled from the Philippines, the grand total was 2,617. The decision to expel the Jesuits from the la Plata region was carried out in stages, because sufficient replacement clergy, who could also speak Guaraní or one of the Chaco languages, could not immediately be found for the mission villages. In 1767 the Jesuits who worked in the *Colegios* of Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Asunción therefore left first and not until the first half of 1768 did the fathers and brothers from the mission villages also finally leave, starting with those from the thirty missions in the Paraná-Uruguay region and then those from the Chaco missions. The expulsion took place under the administration of Bucareli, the governor of Buenos Aires, who raised a large force to clear the missions. However, the armed resistance by the mission Indians that had been feared by Bucareli did not materialise. The Jesuits themselves avoided anything resembling resistance or war, perhaps because they had learned from the earlier *Guerra Guaranítica* and because they wished to avoid the appearance of an independence movement, bent on proclaiming a sovereign state.

The colleges and monasteries of the Order were closed; all their possessions were confiscated and reverted to the Spanish Crown. The mission villages came under civil administration, while the care

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[15] Duviols 1980:74.

of souls was entrusted to clergy of other orders. The dramatic consequences of the changes for the economy, the population and the wellbeing of the missions are discussed elsewhere. For the Spanish population the departure of the missionaries meant a broadening of the opportunities for colonisation, but this is also discussed elsewhere.

Under pressure from Portugal and the Bourbon courts of France and Spain, Pope Clement XIV decided to dissolve the Order in 1773. He believed that the Order could no longer realise its objectives under the circumstances of the time and he wanted peace in Christendom.[16] Mörner has pointed out that the rulers of these countries very much wanted to further strengthen their absolute central authority at that time.[17] The state (monarch) must be *todo poderoso* and *omnicompetente*.[18] Regalism (the assertion of royal rights in ecclesiastical affairs at the expense of the Pope), as it was practised by the enlightened despotism of the time was one of the means of achieving this. The expulsion weakened the position of the regular clergy and strengthened that of the episcopacy and the secular clergy, which further consolidated the power of the Spanish Crown, thanks to its rights of patronage in Spain and the colonies. The decision to expel the Jesuits may therefore also be interpreted as a warning to the regular clergy in general.

According to Mörner, regalism was not the only explanation. He cites, for example, the populist political ideas which were propounded by various prominent thinkers among the Jesuits and which were considered very suspect by the absolute monarchs; the controversial moral theology of various authors belonging to the Order; the rivalry of other monastic orders; the predominance of the Jesuits in education, which was regarded as dubious; the image that the Jesuits had acquired after the *Guerra Guaranítica*; and the myth of a Jesuit state. In Spain, moreover, the example of Portugal and France had its effect. The need for money to carry out the extensive modernisation of the Spanish colonial system was another motive, since the Order owned large estates, livestock, slaves and other property. People in Europe incidentally also had the idea that the mission villages themselves were

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16 The abolition was annulled in 1815.

17 Mörner 1966:*inter alia* 163.

18 McNaspy 1987:47.

very rich[19], but that was in fact a myth that had been brought into the world by jealous individuals or authorities who wanted the villages to pay more taxes. Apart from the handsome churches, there was in fact no wealth; the population and their clergy lived very soberly.[20]

Dynamism and increasing economic prosperity in the late colonial period

The eighteenth century was not only a period of political unrest in Paraguay. There were also various positive developments. The Portuguese expansion pressure began to be directed less towards Eastern Paraguay and more towards Mato Grosso, the population was increasing gradually and both changes increased the possibility of establishing new settlements. A few had already been established before the *Revolución de los Comuneros*, but the majority not until afterwards, in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, when Paraguay's governors became increasingly convinced that the foundation of new towns and villages was the most effective means of securing territory. A number of new settlements arose along and close to the Río Paraguay, which were explicitly intended to offer a better defence against the attacks of the Chaco Indians. Other settlements were established farther into the interior of Eastern Paraguay in order to give a more effective defence against Portuguese expansion and Mbayá aggression and to facilitate the exploitation of the natural resources. The increased security, which had been partly created by these new settlements, also encouraged the movement of the population into the rural areas and an increase in dispersed settlement. The settlement pattern had, in other words, gradually become increasingly complex and was very different in 1800 from what it had been in 1700.

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19 For the expulsion from Spanish America, the abolition of the Order and the underlying causes of the abolition see, particularly, the publications by Mörner (1966; 1985) and Palacios & Zoffoli 1991:381-9. Further: Fassbinder 1926:140-4; Meier 1990:60,73; Santos Hernández 1976:155; White 1975:423 and White 1989:29.

20 Hernández 1913:274-9.

The closing decades of the eighteenth century were also the period of greatest economic dynamism. In Spain, the Hapsburgs had been replaced by the Bourbons in 1700 and that had not been just a simple change of power. The Bourbons introduced a number of administrative modernisation measures in the colonies. They were introduced only gradually at first, but under the government of Carlos III (1759-88), the most important monarch of the Bourbon dynasty, the pace accelerated remarkably. Under the *Real Cédula* of 8 August 1776, Carlos III decided to give the la Plata region the status of a viceroyalty. From that date, the areas which were later to form part of Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, were no longer ruled from Lima, but more directly from Buenos Aires. Another rather revolutionary measure for the la Plata region was the liberalisation of trade in 1778. The port of Buenos Aires ceased to be a more or less closed port. Yet another measure was the division of the viceroyalty, under the *Real Cédula* of 28 January 1782, into 8 *intendencias* or *jurisdicciones*, including that of Paraguay. From that date, the governors were given the status of governors-intendant and a wider range of tasks; besides the usual administrative, legal and military powers they had previously exercised, the governors-intendant also exercised the *jefatura superior de la real hacienda* and were expected to make efforts to promote economic growth. The administration, in fact, became more decentralised and modernised and, at the same time, higher demands of competence were being imposed on the governors-intendant. The various governors-intendant appointed for Paraguay in general gave clear proof of their new responsibility and expertise, with all the attendant positive effects.[21]

A consequence of all these measures was that economic activity in the la Plata region greatly increased and the economy became more diversified. More ships arrived and departed than before. These vessels carried away trading goods from the hinterland of Buenos Aires and supplied the hinterland with products from Spain or other European countries. Traders settled and craftsmen, such as shipwrights, came to the port. This economic revival meant specifi-

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[21] Benítez 1985:160-1,164.

cally for Paraguay that the export of yerba rose, that more tobacco (the cultivation of which had been deliberately encouraged at that time) began to be exported, that an increasing quantity of timber was shipped downstream to supply Buenos Aires and Montevideo (situated in treeless territory), and that other products for which there was a demand in Buenos Aires and Montevideo were also increasingly exported. Various shipyards in and near Asunción started building ships of all sizes, because - in contrast to Buenos Aires - Paraguay possessed the necessary timber and various other raw materials. Stockbreeding revived at that time, since the expulsion of the Jesuits had made new grazing lands available while, thanks to the liberalised trade, the demand for hides (which were much used as packing material) greatly increased. In other words, Paraguay had become more integrated into the regional economy and was enjoying a revival. More Paraguayans began to study, so that the educational level increased somewhat. The growing commerce was partly the result of the fact that Spanish traders had established themselves in Asunción (although not in great numbers), just as they had in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. The arrival of these Spanish traders weakened the position of the traditional *encomendero* élite. The *encomienda*, which had already been declining as an institution for a long time, almost completely disappeared at that time; in its place, increasing use was being made of free wage labourers and slaves. Some of that free labour was supplied by the Indians, who began to leave the decaying mission villages after 1768 and became increasingly integrated into the colonial society. The rise of tobacco production and exports resulted in the money economy slowly beginning to develop in Paraguay and driving out the barter economy. The ultimate result was that Paraguay was a different country in 1800 from what it had been in 1700, not only in respect of the settlement pattern, but also in respect of the economy and administration.[22]

This does not mean, however, that there had been a complete transformation. The *intendencia* of Paraguay still had no more than

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[22] For the changes in the eighteenth century, see, particularly, Velázquez 1983: especially 78,80,85,103-4, as well as Ministerio 1987:40-1.

about 108,000 inhabitants at the end of the eighteenth century and demographically still formed only an insignificant portion of the Spanish empire. Despite some immigration, the population was still growing almost wholly through natural increase and consisted almost entirely of Creoles and mestizoes. Economically, too, the colony still formed part of the periphery at the end of the eighteenth century. It enjoyed only modest prosperity, mainly because the trading opportunities for an inland province like Paraguay remained relatively limited, many taxes had to be paid, defence imposed a constant financial burden and economic growth was not the result of highly modernised production relationships. In fact, all that had occurred was an increase in the already existing traditional activities (the collection of timber and yerba, labour extensive stockbreeding and simple arable farming, including the cultivation of certain commercial crops, such as tobacco).

Independence; politics and society under the dictator José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia (1811-40)

When the independence movement began in Spanish and Portuguese America at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was taken for granted by the rebelling politicians in Buenos Aires that the *intendencia* of Paraguay would also free itself from the mother country and declare its solidarity with the rebellious *Porteños* (inhabitants of Buenos Aires) from the *intendencia* of la Plata, since both territories had formed part of the same viceroyalty. The Paraguayans, however, were not keen to allow their 'country' to become a province of Argentina. A 'liberation army' sent to Paraguay in September 1810, under the command of Manuel Belgrano, with the task of keeping Paraguay under the authority of the new *Junta de Buenos Aires*, was successfully defeated by the Paraguayan militias. This did not mean, however, that Paraguay remained loyal to the mother country. When the last Spanish governor-intendant of Paraguay accepted the help of the Portuguese to put an end to the military threat from Buenos Aires, this governor was pushed aside by the Paraguayans on 14 May 1811 and the revolution also began in Paraguay. Paraguay declared its independence during the First

National Congress of 17 June 1811 (a more formal declaration would not be made until 1842). On 12 October 1811 the revolutionaries concluded a vague agreement with Buenos Aires which referred to a confederation on the basis of equality, but practice quickly showed that the politicians in Buenos Aires were not thinking of a fully independent Paraguay. They wished, in fact, to bring the province under their authority and quickly began to impose customs restrictions in order to make an independent existence difficult for Paraguay.

It was obvious that Paraguay would prefer an independent existence to becoming part of one of the neighbouring countries, since, as a landlocked province, Paraguay had always been geographically isolated and was populated by a group of people apart (mainly Creoles and mestizoes). Moreover, the territory's isolated existence, without the influx of large numbers of immigrants, and the constant struggle against the Portuguese, the Chaco Indians and, in fact, also the Jesuits, had created a fairly strong feeling of solidarity and provincial consciousness. As a peripheral and rather insignificant province of the mother country, Paraguay had maintained few contacts with Spain. Nor had the inhabitants received much support and understanding from Madrid; on the contrary, it had often even suffered hindrance, so that there was no reason for it to remain loyal to Spanish authority.[23]

The choice for independence, however, laid the basis for future problems. From that moment, Paraguay, as a young independent nation, had to maintain itself in a more or less hostile environment. The consequences of this situation would become clear in the later history of the country.

At the beginning of its independence, Paraguay was a country without many large landowners, which meant that there was no large and powerful class of *hacendados*, although there was a small group of notables (military, often ex-*encomenderos*, the majority of whom also owned estates; clergy, and a handful of intellectuals). The country also had a small, but influential, group of partly Euro-

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[23] For further details of the patriotic sentiments in Paraguay, see the recent study by Díaz (1999).

pean, partly Creole, traders. The population, in fact, consisted almost wholly of simple small farmers, craftsmen, slaves and Indians. This opened the way quite easily to a period of more or less dictatorial rule. After the young country had first been governed for a short time by a *Junta Superior Gubernativa*, Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia took power wholly into his own hands in 1814. In 1816 he was appointed dictator for life, which resulted in him ruling the country in an absolute manner until his death in 1840.[24]

Order and authority were maintained by *El Supremo* with stringent punitive measures. He took drastic action against anyone who was suspected of opposition, subversion or collaboration with Buenos Aires. He punished a conspiracy against his person in 1820 with the execution of a number of prominent Paraguayans and long-term prison sentences for others. The property of the conspirators was confiscated. There was consequently no question of unrest and anarchy. At his death in 1840 some 600 prisoners were released.[25]

The hostile attitude of Argentina, the threat of Brazilian imperialism and Francia's fear of entering into alliances which might threaten Paraguay's independence, led the dictator to pursue a policy of strict neutrality and nonintervention, especially in relation to political movements in the neighbouring countries. Although the emigration of Europeans to South America was slowly getting under way during the period of his rule, immigrants were not admitted to Paraguay for fear of possible problems. Foreigners who tried to enter the country illegally, or were suspected of planning to do so, were imprisoned. Dictator Francia tried to protect the national borders as well as he could: in the north against the infiltrations of the Portuguese, Mbayáes and Guanás, and in the south against the Artiguistas and Correntinos, who challenged Paraguay's claim to las Misiones. He even had the five former mission villages which were situated close to the left bank of the Río Paraná eva-

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[24] For the personality of Francia and his period, see, *inter alia,* the publications by Ares Pons (1987, 1990), Irala Burgos (1988), Rengger (1835), Rengger & Longchamps (1971), Rengger, Carlyle & Demersay (1982), Tajima (1988), and White (1975-6, 1978, 1979, 1989).

[25] Pastore 1978:112.

cuated on defensive grounds and set on fire. In the Chaco he took action against the Indian groups who tried to attack Eastern Paraguay.[26]

He countered the emigration of Paraguayans as far as possible. Many of the foreigners who were already living in the country were either forced to leave or decided to go of their own accord. Francia was particularly unfriendly towards the foreign trading élite (numbering about 300 persons, mostly Europeans, in 1811). He suspected them of sympathising with Buenos Aires. He not only kept a close eye on them, but also excluded them from the public administration and imposed heavy taxes on them. Many traders became impoverished at that time, because the volume of foreign trade had suffered a steep decline (particularly the lucrative yerba trade with the southern la Plata region). In the aftermath of the planned coup against Francia in 1820, a number of traders were suspected of participation and liquidated. The outcome of all this was that numerous potential opponents of the regime were excluded. The dictator, in fact, destroyed the traditional economic, social, political and ethnic élite without replacing it with a new one.[27] The Church was also subjected to his will.

The trade barriers which Buenos Aires threw up during the period 1813-18 led to a steep decline of the trade with the la Plata cities. Francia was, moreover, aiming to limit rather than to expand foreign trade, because this would promote the independence of the country. He also tried to regulate and control the remaining foreign trade as much as possible. It was channelled wholly through Itapúa (Encarnación) and Pilar; he quickly forbade trade with Mato Grosso completely. The river navigation suffered a steep decline at that time.

The restrictions on foreign trade forced the president to make the country as self-sufficient as possible in food and traditionally manufactured consumption goods. Agriculture was intensified and somewhat diversified, as were the traditional craft industries. Production in these two sectors was aimed mainly at the small

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[26] Areces & Bouvet 1987:114-5.

[27] Schneider 1984:134.

domestic market, so that the circulation of goods was limited. Some traditional industries were relatively flourishing, while others were unable to develop because of the isolation. By establishing a few dozen *estancias de la república* the state secured the provisioning of the army and the domestic market with livestock products and, at the same time, strengthened its grip on the economy. The state incidentally also tried through other measures to keep the economy well under control. The majority of the economic and political measures were taken by dictator Francia personally; there was no cabinet, while the civil service consisted in fact of only a few clerks.

At that time, Paraguay lost some of its markets for yerba mate and timber in Argentina, Uruguay, Peru and Chile, and its neighbour Brazil seized the opportunity to capture part of these markets.

The monastic orders were dissolved and their property (land, slaves and buildings) nationalised. The land of residents who could not prove their property rights and that of political opponents were also confiscated and declared state property. The same happened to the land of foreigners who had no descendants born in Paraguay when they died. The state regarded itself, moreover, as the legal heir of the Spanish Crown and thus to all the land that had not yet passed into the hands of individual Spaniards during the colonial period and so could be regarded as Crown land. The consequence of all this was that the Paraguayan state became the owner of the greater part of the land in Eastern Paraguay (including the *yerbales*) and of all the land in the Chaco. The people who had previously used the land could lease it from the state. There were not many large landowners and, where they did exist, some of them were eliminated by the dictator. As a result, Paraguay under the dictatorship of Francia was a relatively egalitarian society with a predominantly rural character - a country of *campesinos*.

In Francia's time the population comprised no more than about 225-250,000 persons. The Paraguayans of 1840 were nearly all mestizoes or Indians. The population had already become highly mixed in the colonial period, but the racial mixing continued even further under Francia. This incidentally also came about because Francia forbade whites to marry each other. They had to choose an

Indian, mestizo or black partner. He wished to see an ethnically homogeneous nation.[28]

Thanks to Francia's firm policy against dependency and anarchy, the country succeeded in remaining economically and politically independent. The policy also enabled it to remain outside the rapidly expanding sphere of influence of Great Britain in South America. The country did not have a foreign state debt and nor were private individuals allowed to incur foreign debts. As a result, Paraguay developed differently from many other Latin American countries, which rapidly fell into the economic grip of Great Britain after gaining independence. To quote Schmelz (1981), there was a 'dissociative development'. The feeling of national unity was strengthened during this difficult early period.

At the time of dictator Francia, Paraguay was undoubtedly one of the most closed-off countries of South America. It was mainly because of this that it became surrounded by a haze of mystery. Williams, however, emphasised that the isolation was mainly a diplomatic one, that trade had not come to a complete standstill, that foreigners still lived in the country under Francia, that small groups of political refugees and individuals were even granted asylum and that Paraguay had also been a landlocked province in the colonial period with relatively few external contacts. In his view, therefore, one should not exaggerate the isolation and regard it as something very exceptional.[29]

However this may be, few innovations reached the country and there was no real sign of progress. Nor was Francia in fact interested in changing the socioeconomic structure of Paraguay, except where this contributed to national independence and the consolidation of his rule. The old institutional structures and laws from the colonial period were largely maintained, although Francia did abolish the *cabildos*. Francia's policy was 'consistently conservative and authoritarian'[30]; there was no question of a radical break with the colonial past. The predominantly agrarian economy remained at

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28 Pastore 1978:113; Schneider 1984:134.

29 Williams 1972:*inter alia* 122.

30 Whigham 1991a:30.

a low traditional (colonial) level, and nor did the country become more modern in a cultural sense. For example, there was no printing works during Francia's time and, consequently, no books or newspapers were published, while the few newspapers which did enter Paraguay from abroad were largely intended for the dictator himself. In 1840 Asunción had only one public elementary school; the situation was more favourable in the countryside, because the number of schools there had been increased. The dictator attached no value, however, to secondary education. Because the monastic orders had been abolished, their educational role came to an end.

No important changes occurred in the settlement pattern. Very few new settlements were established and the population continued to be concentrated in the same regions as during the late colonial period. Asunción stagnated, because the export-oriented economy partly collapsed and a number of inhabitants chose the more anonymous countryside for political reasons.

Politics and society under President Carlos Antonio López (1844-62)

An important new period in the history of Paraguay began with the death of *El Supremo* in 1840. After a brief transition, in which the country was first governed by a *Junta* and a Consulate, Carlos Antonio López became the country's first President in 1844. He gave the country its first constitution in that year.[31]

In 1842, Paraguay declared itself independent in a more formal manner than it had previously done. Independence and external recognition of the fact remained the goal. President López gradually succeeded in making considerable progress in this field. Brazil recognised Paraguay as an independent nation on 14 September 1844. Recognition by Bolivia, Venezuela and Austria soon followed. Until his fall in 1852, the Argentine dictator Rosas remained

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[31] For the period of President Carlos Antonio López and his personality, see, *inter alia,* the publications by: Benítez (1990) and Pérez Acosta (1948). Further: Pendle 1967:18-20.

hostile towards Paraguay, which he regarded as no more than a rebellious Argentine province. He kept the Argentine waters closed to Paraguayan vessels, so that ships from Asunción could not proceed farther than Corrientes. Post had usually to be moved in small quantities and with difficulty over land.[32] Relations did not improve until Rosas had disappeared from the political scene. In July 1852 Argentina recognised Paraguay's independence and also granted it free navigation, but the Argentine Congress did not wish to ratify the treaty, so that official recognition was not formally granted until 1856. Great Britain had not wanted to recognise Paraguay, because it feared that this would adversely affect its good relations with Argentina, but when the latter took the first steps towards recognition in 1852, Great Britain considered the time ripe to recognise Paraguay on 4 January 1853. France, the United States and Italy followed on 28 February of the same year.[33]

In practice, little changed in the internal political arena: the President possessed far-reaching powers and ruled in a somewhat absolute manner, without a large cabinet and without many advisers. He regarded himself as head of the Church and the priests as government officials. His brother held the office of vicar general and his son commanded the army.

Despite the absence of political freedoms under his rule, President C.A. López is seen by historians as an enlightened despot, because of the fact that - in contrast to the dictator Francia - he aimed much more to develop the economy of the country and introduced a number of innovations to that end. The first printing press was installed in 1845, enabling the first newspapers and schoolbooks to be printed in the country. Elementary education was free and compulsory from the age of seven years. According to a census of 1857, there were 402 schools, with 16,775 pupils, in that year and, at the end of the period of López' rule (1862), there were

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[32] Hopkins *et al.* 1968 (1852):13.

[33] López 1987:28.

435 schools, teaching over 24,524 pupils.[34] Provision was also made for secondary education and a start was made on providing some technical education, including courses in agriculture. A number of Paraguayans received bursaries to study in Asunción and others were sent to Europe to follow secondary and higher education. Fifty-two young Paraguayans travelled to England and France, for example, to take technical courses.[35]

President C.A. López tried to expand trade, which was not really possible until after 1852, when the Argentinean dictator Rosas fell from power, Argentina recognised Paraguay and both countries agreed that navigation on the la Plata, the Paraná and the Paraguay should be free. The first British merchant ship arrived on 23 November 1852, followed by many others, and ships of other nationalities also started to call at Asunción. The country was thrown open, the ports were improved, trade agreements were concluded with various countries and foreign traders again started to establish themselves in Paraguay, although on a rather limited scale. Western goods increasingly appeared on the market from that time and various new production methods were introduced. Several roads were constructed or improved and, in 1858, a British company was engaged to start the construction of one of the first railway lines in Latin America (and the first in the la Plata region). A state fleet was created to operate a river navigation service. The first telegraph line of the la Plata region was also opened in Paraguay, but that was not until 1864, when President C.A. López had already been succeeded by his son. In the industrial field, the establishment of an iron foundry, an arsenal and a shipyard (where, with the assistance of the British, mainly steamships were built for the navigation to Buenos Aires and Montevideo) were the most noteworthy innovations. There was a great shortage of experts in the technical, military and medical fields, where they were not

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[34] López 1987:37. Kegler de Galeano 1995 (=1976):711 (according to E. Cardozo). Pastore (1978:115) writes that there were 408 public schools in 1856 with 16,755 pupils. Kahle (1984:120) mentions that there were 435 schools at the end of López rule, teaching over 34,000 pupils. The latter number, however, is incorrect.

[35] Pastore 1978:117.

completely absent. For this reason, Paraguay made an appeal to British and other foreign technicians as well as to a number of foreign military advisers and doctors (who worked primarily for the army). Everyone who appeared to be useful was in principle welcome. All foreigners, however, had to work under state direction or supervision.[36] In Asunción, the reconstruction and modernisation which had been started under Francia were continued. Besides more modern homes, there also arose some government buildings which were monumental for their time and a new cathedral, giving the city a more metropolitan atmosphere. López tried to populate the Chaco further by settling French colonists there in 1855, an experiment that unfortunately failed.

The army was expanded and modernised, partly by the purchase of arms in Europe and by starting the manufacture of artillery in the country's own iron foundry and arsenal. In addition to an army, a navy was established. One of the largest forts of South America was built at Humaitá, on the border with Argentina. On the death of President C.A. López, the country had the strongest and most disciplined army in the whole of Latin America, although the quality of the equipment still left something to be desired. In 1864, i.e. two years after President Francisco Solano López had come to power, it numbered about 80,000 men.[37]

The yerba mate and timber reserves, which were declared state property in 1846, were the principal sources of state income. The government granted them in concession to Paraguayans or exploited them directly. The foreign trade in timber and yerba was completely in government hands; only domestic commerce remained open to private traders. In 1854, therefore, the state accounted for 59 per cent of exports. The institution of state livestock farms was maintained and further expanded. In 1863 the state owned about 370,000 cattle, horses and sheep on its *estancias*.

In 1848, it was determined that the 21 communities of Indians and unassimilated mestizoes, which had existed until then in Eastern Paraguay, should lose their special status. The land belonging to

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36 Williams 1977a:238,242-3.

37 Cardozo 1994:88; Kahle 1984:122; Thompson 1869b:66.

these communities became the property of the state. In exchange, the inhabitants were exempted from various taxes and from paying rent on the state land they exploited for three years. From that time, they became ordinary Paraguayan citizens with the same rights and obligations as the other inhabitants, which meant, among other things, that they could serve in the army. This measure further contributed to the state becoming the owner of the greater part of the land in Eastern Paraguay and also promoted further social integration and racial homogenisation. No class of large private landowners of any significance arose during this period.

Private foreign investment was not permitted, nor were foreign loans contracted. State expenditure was wholly covered by the income from activities undertaken by the state and from the income from the taxes on trade.

All these measures show that President C.A. López, like his predecessor, the dictator Francia, aimed to make the state economically as strong as possible in order not to become dependent on foreign countries and in order to be able to resist the neighbouring countries, if necessary. This was the very opposite of a liberal state policy, that was usual elsewhere in Latin America in those days; instead there was far-reaching state intervention. The mercantilist state reached its greatest development under C.A. López. The barter economy was further driven back as more coins and bank notes came into circulation.

López' economic policy was not without success. In 1860 Paraguay had a considerable surplus on its trading balance. It was regarded in Europe at that time as one of the economically more developed countries of South America and as one of the more promising trading partners in that region. Samples of yerba, timber and tobacco were shown at the world exhibition in Paris in 1853 and earned various awards.[38] The period from 1852 to 1865 is therefore referred to as Paraguay's golden age. National sentiment and national self-confidence were considerably strengthened at that time.

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[38] Pastore 1978:117.

In contrast to Francia, who also governed his country in an absolute manner, but did not enrich himself personally, the already well-to-do C.A. López amassed a considerable fortune during his period of rule. He was the principal private landowner and acquired large herds of cattle. By declaring the export of yerba mate a state monopoly, he ensured not only Paraguay of sufficient revenues, but also himself of a generous presidential income. His immediate family also acquired considerable wealth.

Despite the not inconsiderable progress which had been made under President C.A. López after the Francia period, one must not overestimate the changes. Whigham comments on the period of President C.A. López that various authors happily point to such innovations as the construction of the first length of railway line, the building of an iron foundry, the establishment of an arsenal and the opening of a shipyard, but that they forget that these innovations had little effect on traditional Paraguayan society. The primary aim of such modernisation was to strengthen the power of the state in relation to the neighbouring countries and, in fact, also to protect the power of President López himself. Nor should the significance of the journey which the president's son, Francisco Solano López, made to Europe in 1853-54 in order to extend diplomatic relations and conclude various contracts be exaggerated. The development projects completely bypassed the great mass of simple small peasants (mestizoes and Indians), slaves and craftsmen and it may even be doubted whether they were of any significance for the middle group in the society. Even if they had not been followed by a war, these innovations would probably not have marked the beginning of a period of extensive and revolutionary changes. The country had its past and its development still lagged far behind that of Europe in many respects. Paraguay was therefore not Europe, and Carlos Antonio López was certainly not someone of the stature of Bismarck. President C.A. López aimed much more at very gradual changes (as shown, for example, by the phased abolition of slavery) than at rapid modernisation. The other Latin American societies also demonstrated at that time that traditional patterns had their own

life and could not be easily pushed aside.[39] Aside from all this, Paraguay remained a landlocked state with a small population, with all the attendant limitations.

Nor should it be forgotten that not everyone was very taken with the policy of President C.A. López. The mercantilist policy held back the development of a trading élite, which led to increasing discontent, especially after 1853. The lucrative yerba export had been monopolised. Nor could a landowning élite readily develop, because property documents were also required under President C.A. López and the state did not choose to privatise state land on a large scale. The reverse was rather the case: state ownership was expanded, although land could be leased on favourable terms. There was little political freedom.

Nor did recognition by the neighbouring countries solve all the problems. Various border questions remained to be settled. For example, the borders with Argentina and Bolivia in the Chaco were unclear and Brazil was making difficulties about the course of the northern border. Moreover, the latter country insisted on free navigation on the Río Paraguay, because this waterway constituted the easiest and quickest link with Mato Grosso (Corumbá). President López, however, had different ideas, so that Brazil had to exercise pressure in 1855 and again in 1858 to open the Río Paraguay for international through traffic.

The war of the Triple Alliance

After his death in 1862, President C.A. López was succeeded by his son Francisco Solano López (*El Marechal*). The two South American great powers (Brazil and Argentina) were still each other's rivals at that time. In Buenos Aires, the economically expanding and militarily strong Paraguay was regarded as a danger, because it might give support to Argentine provinces which wanted to escape from the central authority of the capital. Paraguay was feared in Brazil, because the latter was dependent on the Río

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[39] Cooney & Whigham 1994:11-2.

Paraguay for its connections with Mato Grosso, and that river flowed partly through Paraguayan territory. Apart from that, there was the question of to what extent Argentina had really accepted the existence of an independent Paraguay. Uruguay, created as an independent state in 1828, still acted at that time as a buffer between Brazil and Argentina, but had by no means always enjoyed political peace since its independence, while Brazil still found it difficult to reconcile itself to the fact that it had been unable to incorporate Uruguay permanently as a province. Taken altogether, the danger of conflicts, or even of war, was therefore by no means imaginary in the region. The new president realised that, for as long Uruguay acted as an independent buffer state between the two great powers, there would be a certain political equilibrium that would also ensure the independent existence of Paraguay. Only then would Paraguay have a chance of being permanently recognised as a fully fledged nation, of being able to obtain equal rights and also playing an appropriate role in the la Plata region.

When Brazil invaded Uruguay in 1864 and began to intervene in the internal political differences of its neighbour, this development was observed with great disquiet by President F.S. López and interpreted as a possible portent of an attack on Paraguay. The tensions in the region increased considerably when Paraguay intervened in the conflict between Brazil and Uruguay by arresting a Brazilian ship that was sailing up the Río Paraguay in November 1864 in order to exercise pressure on Brazil. President López next decided to assist the *Blanco* government in Uruguay in a more direct manner with his troops. In order to be able to offer military support, however, he had to make use of the corridor of Tranquera de Loreto - the shortest connection between Posadas and the Río Uruguay, and that corridor passed through the territory of the Argentine province of Corrientes. Argentina refused to cooperate, because it wished to remain neutral. President F.S. López then declared war on Argentina in March 1865. In so doing, he made a major strategic error, because it would have been far better for him to have had Argentina - the rival of Brazil - on his side than as an enemy. In reaction to these developments, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay (where the liberal *Colorado* President Flores had meanwhile gained power) entered into an unnatural alliance. As the

Triple Alliance, they set themselves the goal of defeating Paraguay.

Despite the heroic resistance of almost the whole nation, Paraguay came off worst in the war with the Triple Alliance (1865-70). It was plundered, laid waste and exhausted, while the population, which probably numbered about 420-450,000 persons at the beginning of the war, had fallen to some 221,000 at the end of 1872; or even to as few as 166,000, according to other sources.[40] As we shall see, the war also resulted in the loss of a considerable part of the national territory, which went to Argentina and Brazil. Besides territorial expansion, the war also gave the two great South American powers another important advantage: Paraguay was eliminated for several decades as a nation of any significance and no longer constituted a threat to the economic hinterland of Buenos Aires, to the authority of Buenos Aires over the northern Argentine provinces, or to Brazilian sovereignty over and access to areas in Mato Grosso. The political and economic position of the two great powers was altogether considerably strengthened after the war.[41]

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[40] See Chapter 35.

[41] A recent and excellent study of the war and its background is that by Whigham (2002/3). See, further, Bethell (1996) and McLynn (1979). A brief summary of the background, the course and the consequences of the war is given by Nickson 1993:594-8. Bethell and McLynn put the often exaggerated role of Great Britain in the conflict into perspective. Tate (1979:60) also emphasised that the role of Great Britain should not be exaggerated; it was not wholly neutral, but is was certainly not out for a defeat of Paraguay. It had very few interests in the country.

3

The borders, natural features and indigenous population

This chapter deals with the geographical and human context within which the developments that have occurred since 1515 must be situated. We first consider the borders of the study area, and then the physical characteristics of East and West Paraguay, while the third part describes the indigenous population of Paraguay in about 1515.

The borders until 1811

During the period up to 1870, the region designated as 'Paraguay' did not always have the same borders.[1] As a result of various *desmembraciones* (dismemberments) it was gradually reduced in size. The borders which Paraguay were eventually given after the war with the Triple Alliance largely correspond with the present ones.[2]

Paraguay had its largest extent at the beginning of the sixteenth century when the *capitulaciones* were drawn up - in 1534 - which gave *adelantado* Pedro de Mendoza wide powers of conquest and colonisation (see Chapter 4) and led to the formal establishment of

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[1] According to Sánchez Quell (1983:26), Pará-gua-y means 'river of the parrot valley'. Nickson (1993:435) gives various other interpretations of the name Paraguay.

[2] For a systematic description of the successive territorial reductions, see especially Audibert 1893, Machuca Martínez 1951, Vasconcellos 1970 and Vittone 1966.

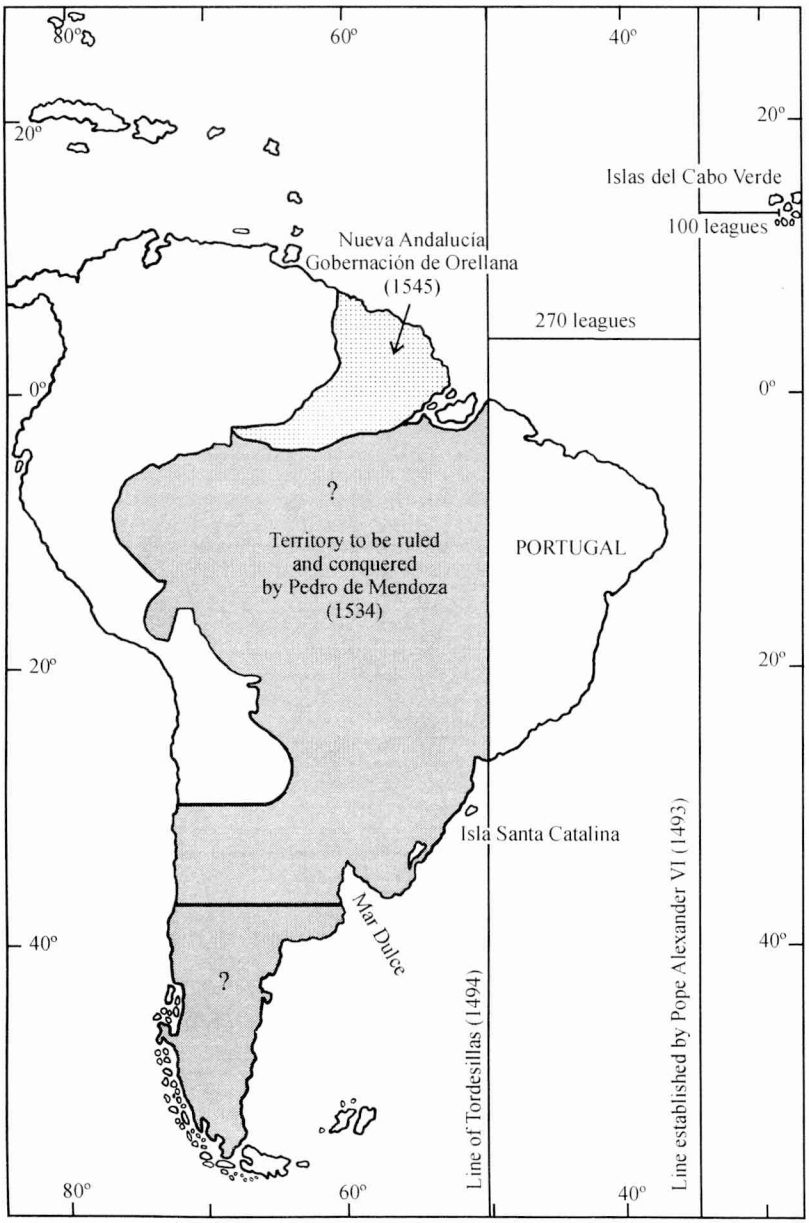

Fig. 3.1. The *provincia gigante* of *adelantado* Pedro de Mendoza (after Machuca Martínez 1951:Map 5; Chaves n.d:47-8).

the province of la Plata. The border of Mendoza's sphere of jurisdiction was formed in the east by the boundary laid down in 1494 in the Treaty of Tordesillas between the Portuguese and Spanish spheres of influence and, farther to the south, by the Atlantic Ocean. To the west, the area extended in the north to the foothills of the Andes, i.e. to the area that fell under the *capitulaciones* of Hernando de Pizarro and Diego de Almagro. The *capitulaciones* of the latter *conquistador* were defined at about the same time as those of Mendoza. South of Almagro's territory, the western boundary of Mendoza's field of operations extended over a length of 200 *leguas* to the Pacific coast. This length meant that the southern border was situated at 36°57'09", not far from the Río Negro. According to Machuca Martínez, however, the whole of the south of South America (including Tierra del Fuego) formed part of Mendoza's concession. The northern border was vague. It may have extended to the Caribbean coast, which meant that Mendoza's territory also comprised what would later become Venezuela and the Guyanas; or it may have extended only to the equator, i.e. roughly to the Amazon. The text of the *capitulaciones* does not give a definite answer to this. However this may be, 'Paraguay' comprised at that time the greater part of South America and, certainly, the whole of the la Plata basin (Fig. 3.1). It is not surprising therefore that Mendoza's territory soon came to be designated as *la Provincia Gigante de las Indias*.[3] Pedro de Mendoza was incidentally active in only a very small portion of this gigantic territory. The viceroyalty of Peru was created in 1544 and Paraguay became a province of it. For legal matters it fell under the *audiencia* of Charcas until 1776.

The *provincia gigante* underwent its first contraction, at least according to Machuca Martínez, after Francisco de Orellana had navigated the whole length of the Amazon and explored the lands along its banks. As a reward, in 1545, Carlos V appointed him governor of the *gobernación* of Nueva Andalucía, that comprised, besides the northern part of the Amazon region, the eastern part of what is now Venezuela and the three Guyanas. Orellana incidentally

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[3] Benítez 1985:30; Cardozo 1967:193; Chaves n.d.:47-8; Sánchez Quell 1995: 40; Velázquez 1977:25.

never exercised his office, because when he returned to the mouth of the Amazon in 1550, he fell ill and died.[4]

The second territorial reduction occurred when Pedro de la Gasca (Lagasca), the president of the *Real Audiencia* in Lima, decreed in 1548 that the northern border of the province of Paraguay should be defined at 14° S. This placed the Amazon region outside the jurisdiction of the province of Paraguay.[5]

The third *desmembración* followed quite soon afterwards in 1560 (according to the counting of Machuca Martínez). At the suggestion of Nufrio de Chaves, the territory of the Chiriguanos and Cochabamba (Mojos or Chiquitos) was declared an independent province by Andrés Hurtado de Mendoza, the viceroy of Peru. The new *gobernación* was given the name Santa Cruz de la Sierra, after the settlement that was founded there by Nufrio de Chaves in 1561. The province was situated between the rivers Parapití, Guapay and Mamoré and extended to latitude 14° S in the north. Nuflio de Chaves was appointed the acting governor (*teniente gobernador*) (See Fig. 3.2).[6]

The most radical reduction was the division which was implemented in 1617 and constituted the fourth *desmembración*. The Spanish were then no longer living exclusively in the neighbourhood of Asunción, but had founded three towns to the east and north of that place (in territory that now belongs to Brazil), i.e. Ciudad Real, Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo and Santiago de Jerez. They had then also established some settlements farther to the south and west, namely, Santa Fe, Buenos Aires, Corrientes and Concepción del Bermejo (Fig. 5.1). The settlements acted not only as support points on the route to the Atlantic coast of what is now Brazil, or to the estuary of la Plata, but were also intended to counter the Portuguese expansion west of the Tordesillas line. The latter, in particular, was no simple task, because the Portuguese

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[4] In 1565 the province of Nueva Andalucía was reconstituted. Hernández de Serpa (Zerpa) was appointed governor. Like the border of the *gobernación* of Pedro Malaver de Silva, the southern border of his *gobernación* was defined at 6° 20' S (Machuca Martínez 1951: 9,13).

[5] Machuca Martínez 1951:13; Vittone 1966:38-41.

[6] Benítez 1985:91; Machuca Martínez 1951:15; Vittone 1966:43-4.

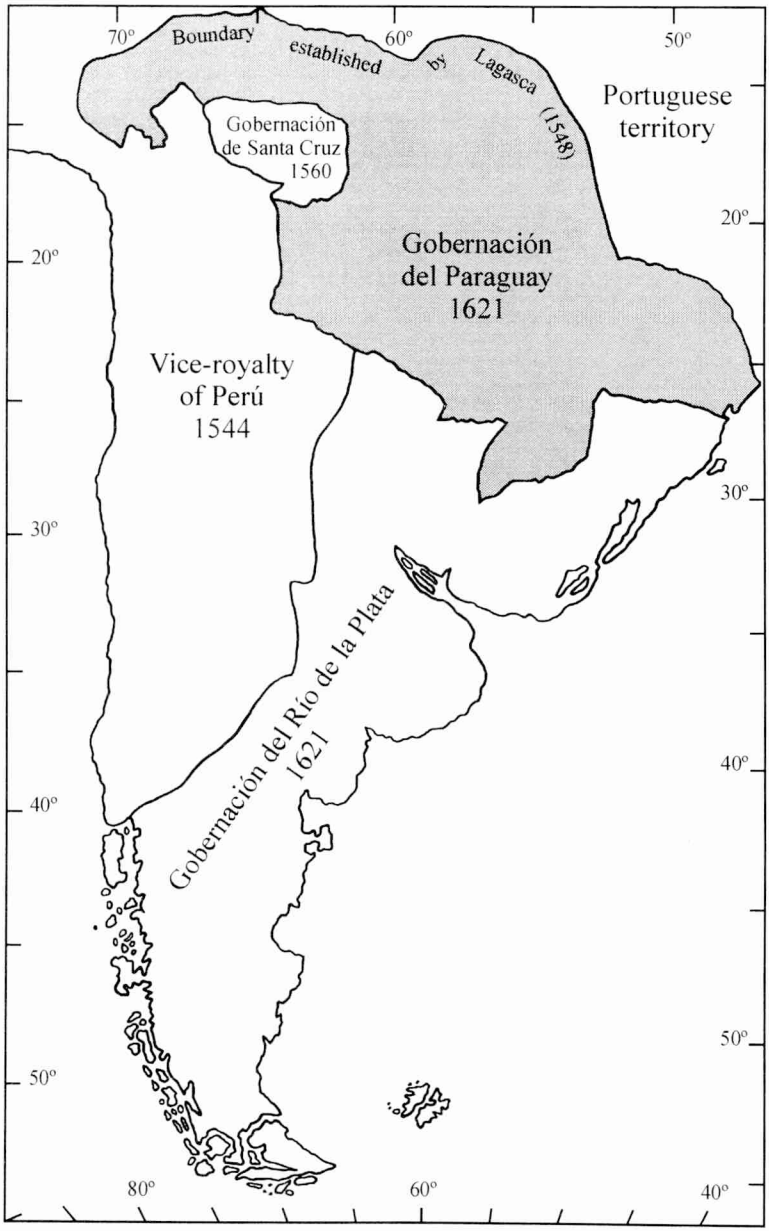

Fig. 3.2. Paraguay in 1621 (after Machuca Martínez 1951: maps 7 to 10).

were far from happy with the demarcation of the spheres of influence laid down in 1494 and paid little heed to the border line. Governor Hernandarias therefore rightly observed at the beginning of the seventeenth century that the province of Paraguay was really far too large to be adequately governed and integrally defended as a Spanish possession, since Paraguay still extended at that time as far as the parallel of 14° S in the north and at least to the Río Negro in the south; it extended to the Atlantic coast and the Tordesillas line in the east and to the foothills of the Andes and the Pacific Ocean in the west. One of the consequences of these enormous dimensions was that the help which had to be offered from Asunción from time to time to the inhabitants of Ciudad Real and Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo to counter Portuguese infiltrations and raids, did not arrive until the Portuguese had withdrawn again. Governor Hernandarias therefore proposed a division in 1607 in the hope of thereby achieving a more effective occupation and defence. He had in mind a separate province, which was to comprise the area east of the Alto Paraná (el Guairá), with the towns Villa Rica and Ciudad Real, and el Itatín in the north, with Santiago de Jerez. But there was no response to his ideas. The necessity of a division was subsequently pointed out several times, e.g. by *oidor* Francisco de Alfaro and - yet again - by Hernandarias in 1616. The Spanish king eventually decided, by *Real Cédula* of 16 December 1617, to implement the division. This was effected in 1620-21, when the governors who were appointed to the two new provinces took office.[7] The division, however, differed considerably from what governor Hernandarias had in mind. Two new provinces were created on the basis of earlier proposals by the viceroy Montesclaros, but with completely different borders. They were the *gobernación de la Plata* and the *gobernación del Paraguay* (or: *del Guairá* [8]), both part of the viceroyalty of Peru.

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[7] Cardozo 1967:477-8; Velázquez 1977:26; Vittone 1966:45.

[8] The designation el Guairá was used in a narrower and a wider sense in the early colonial period. In the first sense, it referred to the area east of the Alto Paraná (now Brazilian territory); in the second sense, el Guairá was synonymous with the whole province of Paraguay. In the present study the name el Guairá is used only in the limited sense.

The *gobernación de la Plata* comprised the southern part of the former province of Paraguay. The borders roughly corresponded with those of the later Argentina and Uruguay. Buenos Aires, which had been founded in 1580, became the capital and thus the seat of the new governor. In addition, there were three other towns within this new *gobernación*, namely, Santa Fe, Corrientes and Concepción del Bermejo. A large part of this territory had been scarcely explored at the beginning of the seventeenth century, let alone occupied by the Spanish.[9]

The *gobernación del Paraguay* came to comprise the northern part and consisted, besides Paraguay, of parts of present-day eastern Bolivia and southern Brazil. In the north, the *gobernación* extended officially to the parallel of 14° S and, in the east, to the Tordesillas line and the Atlantic coast. In the northwest the new *gobernación* extended to that of Santa Cruz and in the west to the Cordillera de los Chiriguanos and the Río Parapití (*audiencia* of Charcas). In the southwest, the border between the *gobernaciones* of la Plata and Paraguay was originally formed by the line separating the jurisdiction of the city of Asunción from that of the settlements of Corrientes and Concepción del Bermejo, but when the latter settlement was abandoned in 1633, Paraguay was extended to the Río Bermejo.[10] In the south, the border between the two *gobernaciones* was not explicitly demarcated, but it was long tacitly understood that it was formed by the Río Paraná. In practice, however, the borders followed a somewhat different line, thanks to the illegal Portuguese expansion west of the Tordesillas line (Fig. 3.1). Asunción became

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[9] Juan de Garay had undertaken an expedition from Buenos Aires in 1581 to reconnoitre the area along the coast as far as the later Mar del Plata and the Sierras Balcarce (later christened Sierra del Volcán and Sierra del Tandil). Hernandarias had explored the interior as far as the Río Negro from Buenos Aires in 1604-5 (Aranguren 1963:69). For details of Hernandarias' expedition, see Cardozo 1989:216-7.

[10] From 1598, an imaginary east-west line dividing the area between the Río Bermejo and the Río Pilcomayo into two equal parts functioned as a border in the Chaco between the jurisdiction of Asunción and that of Concepción del Bermejo. On the right bank of the Río Paraguay, a strip of land 8 *leguas* wide was reserved as far as the river's mouth for the benefit of the jurisdiction of Asunción (Benítez 1985:183).

the capital of the newly created province. In addition, like that of la Plata, the *gobernación* contained at its creation three other towns: Santiago de Jerez, Ciudad Real and Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo. In the *gobernación del Paraguay*, too, by no means all the regions had been fully explored at the beginning of the seventeenth century, while only a small part had been actually occupied by the Spanish.

The two new *gobernaciones* were each endowed with a bishopric: those of Asunción and Buenos Aires.

The division of 1617 unfortunately did not enable the Spanish colony to be better defended against Portuguese aggression. Soon afterwards, the attacks of the Portuguese increased to such an extent that the whole region east of the Alto Paraná (el Guairá), the region north of the Cordillera de Mbaracayú and Río Apa (Jerez-Ñu; el Itatín) and the three towns situated in these regions, had to be abandoned. Ciudad Real was abandoned in 1632 and Santiago de Jerez in 1633; Asunción and Villa Rica remained as the only urban centres, albeit that the latter place was relocated at a new and safer site after 1632. This left a largely empty territory extending to the line of Tordesillas and the Atlantic Ocean, that belonged *de jure* to the province of Paraguay until 1750, but from 1632 was completely controlled *de facto* by the Portuguese. The latter incorporated it into their captaincy (*capitanía*) of São Vicente.

As a consequence of this fourth *desmembración* and the subsequent Portuguese aggression, which led to the depopulation of el Guairá, Jerez-Ñu and el Itatín, the *gobernación* of Paraguay became a landlocked province. Paraguay became dependent for its links with the sea on another Spanish province (la Plata) and on the towns situated there (especially Buenos Aires), with all the attendant consequences for its future development potential. One positive effect was that the governors came to live in Asunción from 1621.[11]

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[11] Between 1590 and 1620 it had been customary for the governors to reside almost permanently in Buenos Aires; Hernandarias resided for most of the time in Santa Fe, near his *estancias*. At that time, the administration of the interior was then entrusted to deputies (*tenientes*) (Benítez 1985:85; Mora Mérida 1971:57-8; Velázquez 1975:21).

From 1609, the Jesuits began to establish mission villages. They did this within the mission province of Paraguay (las Misiones), which had been created in 1604 and, besides Paraguay, also comprised parts of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay (see Fig. 8.1). When the missionaries found themselves forced after 1630 to relocate their villages from el Guairá to the south and many new settlements were also established in that more southerly territory, near the Río Paraná and Río Uruguay, it was found desirable to demarcate the borders between the sees of Asunción and Buenos Aires - and, in fact, those between the two *gobernaciones* - more clearly and accurately, although it was not until the first quarter of the eighteenth century that the task was completed. By *Real Cédula* of 11 February 1724, Philip V gave the bishop of Paraguay, together with his colleague in Buenos Aires, the task of preparing this boundary rearrangement. This resulted in July 1727 in a proposal to allocate the 13 mission villages situated in the Paraná region to the bishopric of Paraguay (Asunción) and the remaining 17 (situated in the Uruguay region) to that of la Plata (Buenos Aires). This proposal corresponded to the situation which had evolved in practice.[12] The borders between the two bishoprics ought at the same time to form the borders between the territories of the two *gobernaciones*.

When the boundary demarcation proposal was still being worked out, Paraguay became - as we have described - the scene of serious political unrest, arising from the *Revolución de los Comuneros*. As we have seen, the primary cause of this unrest was annoyance at the activities of the Jesuits and the position which they had succeeded in acquiring in Paraguay (Chapter 2). It is not surprising, therefore, that the Jesuits requested the Spanish Crown to allocate the whole of their mission province to the *gobernación* of la Plata. Philip V acceded to this by *Cédula Real* of 26 November 1726. The decree came into force in 1729. The specific significance of the

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[12] The thirteen villages which became Paraguayan were eight settlements between the Tebicuary and the Paraná (San Ignacio Guazú, Santa María, Santa Rosa, Santiago, San Cosme y Damián, Jesús, Trinidad and Itapúa) and five near the left bank of the Paraná (Candelaria, Santa Ana, Loreto, San Ignacio Miní and Corpus). The 17 villages which were allotted to Buenos Aires are listed in Chapter 8. See also Fig. 8.1.

measure was that the Río Tebicuary then became the border between the two *gobernaciones*. This situation would continue until 1782. In practice las Misiones led a more or less separate existence from that of the two *gobernaciones*. The thirty villages that were founded there formed a world apart.[13]

The Portuguese also succeeded in expanding their sphere of influence still farther to the south and west later in the seventeenth century, considerably farther even than they were permitted to do under the Treaty of Tordesillas. In the eighteenth century, the existing situation was formalised and new borders were established between the domains of Spain and Portugal, firstly in the Treaty of Utrecht (11-4-1713) and, subsequently, in that of Madrid (13-1-1750) (Fig. 3.3). As a result, the Portuguese colony underwent a considerable territorial expansion. The borders established in 1750 were based on the *uti possidetis*, i.e. on the occupations (*posesiones*) which the two countries had achieved up to that year. The draughtsmen, however, did not look so much at what had been actually occupied by Portugal, as at the territory covered by the *bandeirantes* during their raids and reconnaissances in a westerly direction. As a result, the Portuguese came into the possession of an immense territory west of the Tordesillas line, which extended in the southwest to the Uruguay, the Alto Paraná and the Alto Paraguay. In those areas they had founded only a limited number of settlements, some of which also served as military support points. For Paraguay, the 1750 treaty meant that, in the east, el Guairá was now also formally lost, together with parts of what is now southern Mato Grosso in the north.

The Treaty of Madrid is also known as the *Tratado de Permuta*, because under it, the fortress of Colonia do Sacramento, which the Portuguese had established in 1680 on Uruguayan territory, directly opposite Buenos Aires, was exchanged for the area east of the Alto Uruguay, containing seven mission villages established by the

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[13] Benítez 1985:92-3,174-6; Cardozo 1991:165; Machuca Martínez 1951:19-20; Maeder & Bolsi 1983:128; Ministerio 1987:33; Vittone 1966:50-3.

Jesuits.[14] These villages incidentally formed, in conformity with the border proposal of 1727 and the division decree of November 1726, part of the *gobernación* of la Plata. The Indians were expected to evacuate the seven villages and look for new homes on Spanish territory. As we have seen, they could not agree to this decision. The Jesuits also protested, if only because it was almost impossible to transfer no fewer than 30,000 mission Indians to other, more westerly, mission settlements. The discontent led - as we have said - to an all-out war, the *Guerra Guaranítica*.[15]

Carlos III, who came to the Spanish throne in 1759, was not very happy with the Treaty of Madrid, that had been signed by his predecessor, Ferdinand VI, since its terms were unfavourable for Spain. He decided to revoke it and concluded a new treaty in el Pardo on 12 February 1761. In the new treaty it was agreed to return to the pre-1750 borders. The area with the seven mission villages east of the Río Uruguay was restored to Spain, while Spain allowed Portugal to retain Colonia do Sacramento and tolerated the Portuguese expansion west of the Tordesillas line. This treaty had few practical consequences for Paraguay.

In the 1770s the Spanish tried to make good some of the loss of territory of the preceding centuries. Without encountering much resistance, they again made themselves masters of the island of Santa Catalina lying off the Atlantic coast - an important support point from the beginning of the sixteenth century. They also captured the fortress of Colonia do Sacramento. In 1777, the borders between the Spanish and Portuguese empires were again formally regulated in the Treaty of San Ildefonso, and subsequently officially ratified in the Treaty of el Pardo in 1778.[16] It was this treaty, according to Machuca Martínez, that caused the fifth *desmembración*. In broad outline, the borders were accepted which had already been designated in the Treaty of Madrid. The Spanish returned the island of Santa Catalina and allowed the Portuguese to retain the area

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[14] For the more precise line of the southeast border, see Benítez 1985:152; Cardozo 1967:28-9; Caraman 1976:335.

[15] Cardozo 1967:454-5; Palacios & Zoffoli 1991:372-3.

[16] Nickson (1993:530) incorrectly states that the Treaty of San Ildefonso is dated 12-2-1761.

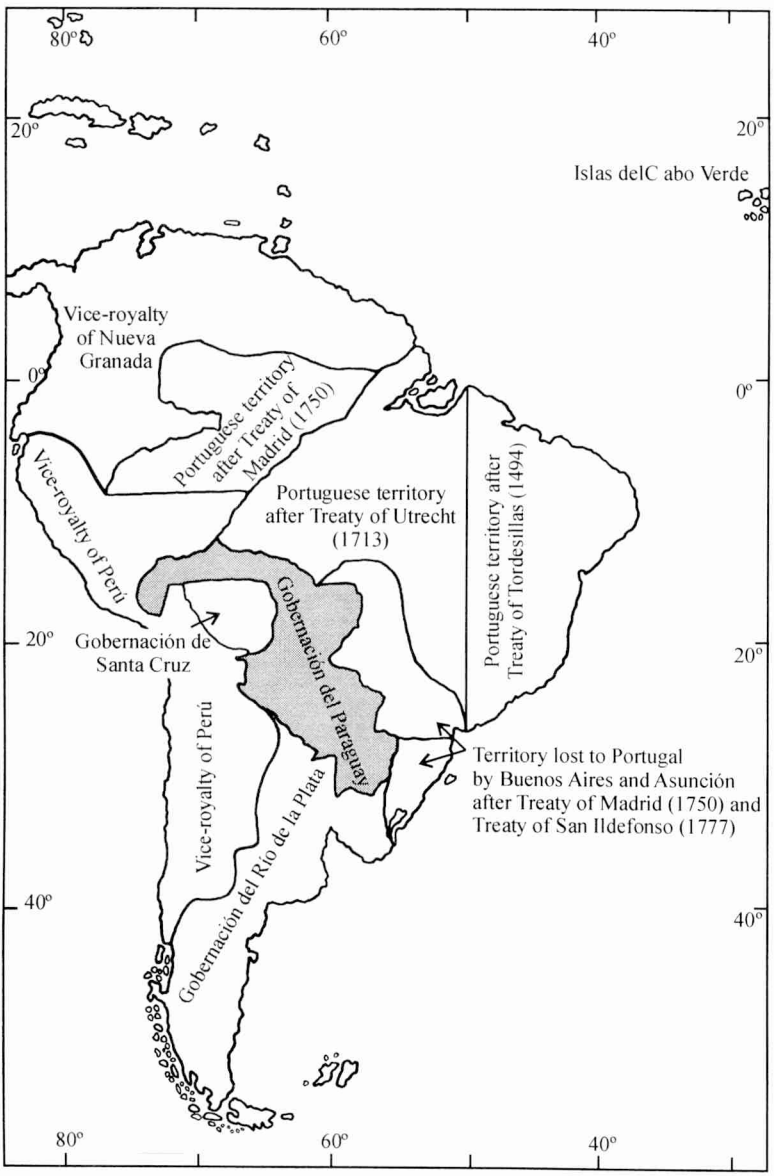

Fig. 3.3. The territorial losses of Spain in South America in the eighteenth century and the borders of Paraguay in 1777 (after Machuca Martínez 1951: Maps 11 and 12).

from the coast to the Alto Paraná (the area of the present Brazilian states of Paraná and Santa Catarina) (Fig. 3.3). Spain retained the area between the Atlantic Ocean and the Río Uruguay, which meant that the seven mission villages mentioned above remained on Spanish territory. Colonia do Sacramento also became a Spanish possession and would remain so. All of this yielded no territorial advantage for Paraguay, because the areas concerned formed part of the *gobernación* of la Plata. It did not receive back areas such as el Guairá. Paraguay consequently did not gain a new access to the sea, but remained a landlocked province. In the north, the border of Eastern Paraguay was fixed at the 22nd parallel, which meant that parts of Mato Grosso, which had previously been Paraguayan territory and had also been partly occupied from Asunción, were permanently lost. In the east the Alto Paraná now also became the *de jure* border of the province of Paraguay.[17]

> More specifically, the following dividing lines were defined in the provisional Treaty of San Ildefonso (and in the Treaty of 1750) as forming the borders between the Spanish (Paraguayan) and the Portuguese territory: the Río Yguazú to its mouth in the Paraná, the Río Paraná from the Río Yguazú, the Río Ygurey to the upper course of the main branch, a straight line running from there to the main branch of the nearest river flowing into the Paraguay (the Río Corrientes), the Río Corrientes to its mouth in the Paraguay and, lastly, the main bed of the Río Paraguay, first to the lake of Xarayes and then to the mouth of the Río Jaurú.
>
> These borders were partly perfectly clear, but partly not. When the time came to carry out a more precise and more concrete demarcation on the ground, no river called the Ygurey or Corrientes could be found. Félix de Azara, who was responsible for carrying out the border demarcation on behalf of Spain, found himself faced with great practical difficulties. He finally managed to place the Ygurey, but the Corrientes (about which there was already some doubt in the treaty) remained a mystery. Nor could the Portuguese give a definite answer about the existence of a Río Corrientes. They were, in fact, not very cooperative in general, so that the boundary commission's work

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[17] Benítez 1985:154-5; Machuca Martínez 1951:21-4; Vittone 1966:46-7. See Benítez 1985:154-5 for a description of the line of the border defined in the Treaty of San Ildefonso.

progressed awkwardly and slowly. Azara finally decided that the northern border of the province of Paraguay should be formed by a) the river Tareyry, which flowed into the Paraguay near the Fuerte Borbón, b) a line running from there to the Río Yaguarey (= Ygurey) and c) the latter river (see also Fig. 3.5). This would make the parallel of 22° 4' S the northern limit of Paraguayan territory. Azara did not accept that the northern border of Paraguay should be the Río Apa, a solution much favoured by the Portuguese.[18]

On 8 August 1776, the viceroyalty of la Plata was created by Spain. It consisted roughly of what are now Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, a piece of southern Brazil and Bolivia.[19] The objective was to stimulate the development of southeastern South America and to protect it better against the Portuguese and the English, who were constantly trying to expand their spheres of influence. Paraguay remained a separate *gobernación* within this new viceroyalty, just as it had previously been a province of the viceroyalty of Peru. For Paraguay the change was not accompanied by territorial expansion or contraction. For legal matters, from 1776 it no longer fell under the *audiencia* of Charcas, but under that of la Plata.

Another administrative change took place in 1782, when the viceroyalty of la Plata was divided by a decree of 28 January into eight *intendencias* and the administration became more decentralised. Paraguay (designated as la Asunción del Paraguay) became one of these *intendencias* and was given the same borders as the see of Paraguay.[20] Besides the *intendencias*, four separate *gobernaciones inferiores* were created, including that of las Misiones (containing the 30 former Jesuit missions), that of los Mojos and that of Chiquitos.

The first governor-intendant of Paraguay, Pedro Melo de Portugal (1778-87), succeeded in 1784 in persuading the viceroy, Marqués de Loreto, to bring the 13 'Paraguayan' mission villages and their territory, which had been added in 1729 to the *gobernación de la Plata*, back under the jurisdiction of Asunción. The renewed

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[18] Benítez 1985:154-5; Ferrer de Aréllaga 1985:139-45,169.

[19] Benítez 1985:161.

[20] Machuca Martínez 1951:25.

integration was realised under the administration of governor-intendant Joaquín Alós y Brú (1785-96). The Río Paraná again became the border river between the two *gobernaciones* (except in the southeast, where the border of Paraguay was situated east of the river and was formed by certain streams and the Sierra Grande). The other 17 mission villages continued to form part of the *intendencia* of la Plata, in conformity with the arrangement proposed in 1727.

On 28 March 1803, the 30 villages were grouped into an administratively and militarily independent *gobernación*, mainly with the aim of arresting the decline that had set in after the expulsion and exodus of the Jesuits in 1767-8. This made the Río Tebicuary once more the southern border of the *intendencia* of Paraguay. But this situation lasted for only a very short time because, on 12 September 1805, the *Junta de Fortificaciones y Defensa de Indias* decided to bring all thirty mission villages (las Misiones), together with Paraguay under a single administration. This was realised in 1806 and Bernardo de Velazco y Huidobro, who had been governor of the independent *gobernación* of las Misiones, became intendant governor of 'Paraguay y las Misiones'. The measure meant that the area extending from the Río Tebicuary and the Río Paraguay to the left bank of the Río Uruguay again became Paraguayan territory. The plan of May 1808 to appoint a military commandant reporting directly to the viceroy met with resistance, so that the commandant was eventually placed under the authority of Paraguay and the existing situation was continued in practice.[21]

Even after 1777 the Portuguese paid little heed to the boundary agreements that had been made. For example, they extended their sphere of influence farther to the south. During the war between Spain and Portugal that broke out in 1801, the *bandeirante* Francisco Pereira Pinto forcibly recaptured the seven mission villages situated east of the Uruguay. Governor Velazco, who was appointed governor of the independent *gobernación* of las Misiones in 1803, did not trouble to drive them off. From that date, the seven villages

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[21] Benítez 1985:175-7; Cardozo 1994:49; Machuca Martínez 1951:27; Maeder & Bolsi 1983:129-30.

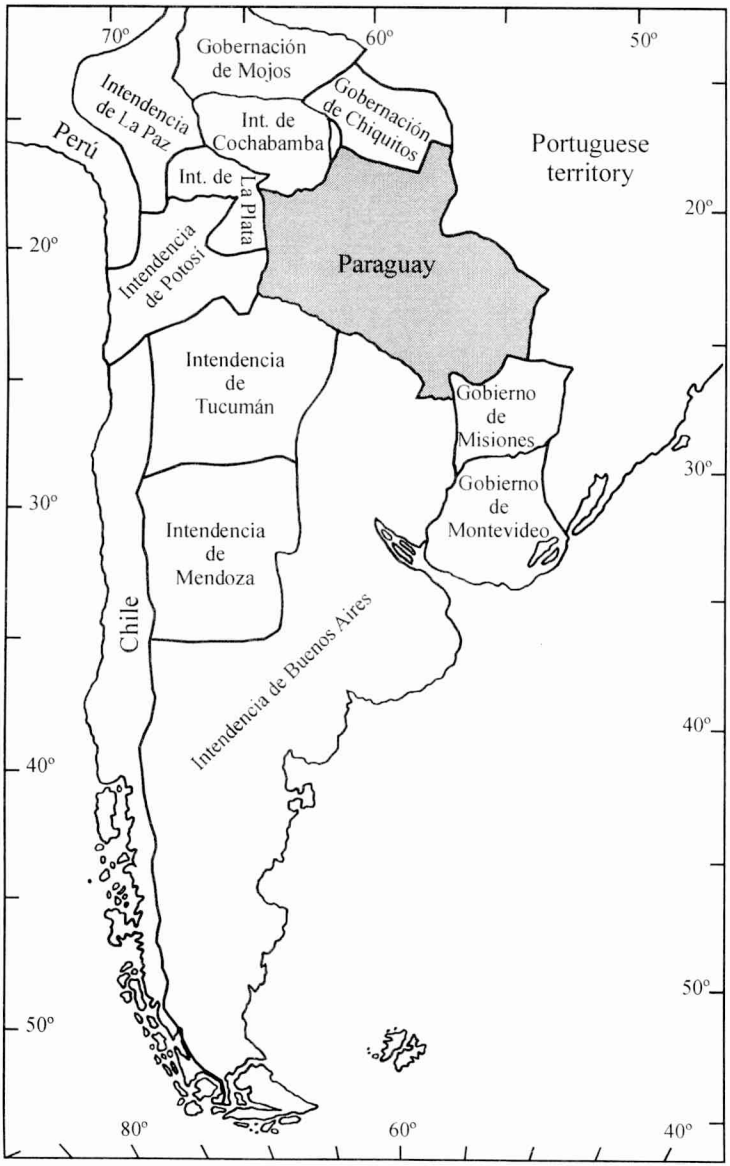

Fig. 3.4. The administrative divisions of southern Spanish America in 1782, after the creation of *intendencias* and *gobernaciones* (after Machuca Martínez 1951:Map 13).

finally became a Portuguese possession under the Treaty of Badajoz. This had no direct consequences for Paraguay, but many more, on the other hand, for the borders of the later Argentina and Uruguay.[22]

The borders from 1811

When Paraguay declared its independence in 1811 it assumed, on the basis of the *uti possidetis*, the borders of the previously existing *intendencia* (Fig. 3.4 and 3.5). These were specifically - proceeding in a clockwise direction: the Río Jaurú, the Río Paraguay, the 'Río Corrientes' (Blanco), an imaginary line, the Río Yaguarey (Ygurey; Ivinheima), the Río Paraná, the Río Yguazú, the Río Pepiry or Pequiry, the Río San Antonio, the Río Uruguay, the Río Aguapey, the *esteros* de Yverá, the Río Paraná to the confluence with the Río Paraguay, an imaginary line parallel with the Paraguay, the Río Bermejo, an imaginary line, the Cordillera de Aguarague, the Río Parapití, the *bañados* del Yzozog, an undefined line, the source of the Río Otuquis or Negro and, lastly, an undefined line to the Río Jaurú (See Fig.3.5).[23]

No clear arrangement was made about las Misiones under the treaty that was concluded with the southern neighbours on 12 October. In practice, however, as appears from the border description given above, the Paraguayans regarded not only the area between the Río Tebicuary and the Río Paraná (with eight former mission villages), but also the area east of the Río Paraná to the Río Uruguay as part of Paraguay. The dictator Francia therefore several times pointed out to his *delegados* that the territory of Paraguay in las Misiones extended to the Río Aguapey and the Río Uruguay. Politicians in the province of Corrientes thought differently, however - they regarded at least the ten villages which had formed part of the bishopric of la Plata as belonging to Corrientes. These mission

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[22] Kleinpenning 1995:108-10; Machuca Martínez 1951:27; Palacios & Zoffoli 1991:378.

[23] Benítez 1985:258.

Fig. 3.5. The borders of Paraguay in 1811, on the basis of *uti possidetis* (after Benítez 1996:63; White 1989:3).

settlements were, however, destroyed by Brazilian troops during fighting and the five Paraguayan ones were evacuated by Francia in 1817 and set on fire (see Chapter 11). Paraguay withdrew, so to speak, behind the Río Paraná. The Paraguayans did subsequently manage to keep a trading corridor between the Paraná and the Uruguay (the Itapúa-São Borja route) under their control, but they otherwise refrained from an intensive occupation. Up to the 1840s, Paraguayan troops controlled only the area as far as Tranquera de Loreto, on the southern bank of the Alto Paraná.

In July 1841, the Consulate that governed Paraguay signed a border treaty with the province of Corrientes, which laid down that the former mission territory between Tranquera de Loreto and the east bank of the Paraná (the area east of the Aguapey) should be Paraguayan territory and that Isla Apipé and the Uruguay villages should pass under the authority of Corrientes. On 10 June 1849, President C.A. López decided to send troops to occupy the area of the five former mission villages east of the Paraná.[24] His aim was to prevent the area being annexed from Argentina, where the dictator Rosas had come to power in 1835. He also wanted to safeguard the link with Brazil. The military occupation was effected on 27 June. The fear that an annexation might take place was not wholly imaginary, because Misiones was an area with rich natural resources (potential arable land, extensive grazing lands, and woodlands) and was therefore highly suitable for further colonisation. Moreover, it was an important strategic area of passage (via the Itapúa-São Borja axis). President López' action could not prevent the occurrence of a certain amount of spontaneous occupation. López incidentally soon withdrew his troops again.

On 15 July 1852 a navigation and border treaty was signed with Argentina, in which the Río Paraná became the border river between Paraguay and Argentina and, on 17 July, Argentina recognised the independence of Paraguay. In consequence, Paraguay surrendered the Misiones area on the left bank of the Paraná to the Argentine confederation in exchange for exclusive sovereignty over

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[24] Cardozo 1967:219-20; López 1987:26; Machuca Martínez 1951:29; Whigham 1991a:58,65.

the Río Paraguay and neutralisation of a terrain of one *legua* from the Río Bermejo to Tres Bocas. The Paraguayans would also enjoy unhindered passage on the reach from Encarnación to São Borja. However, the Argentine Congress rejected the treaty. President López refused to surrender Misiones if the treaty was not implemented in full. In so doing, he maintained his claims to the Misiones area on the far side of the Paraná.[25]

In the west, the Chaco was claimed by Francia as far as the foothills of the Andes. He took the view that the southern border was situated at the island of Atajo (i.e. at the confluence of the Río Paraguay and the Río Paraná) and the northern border at the Río Jaurú. Similar claims were subsequently made by President C.A. López. When the latter died in 1862, the area between the Río Negro and a line running halfway between the Bermejo and the Pilcomayo was considered Paraguayan.[26]

The border with Brazil in the northeast was contested at that time. The two countries disagreed about the possession of the area between the rivers Apa and Blanco and the area north of the Cordillera del Mbaracayú (despite the fact that Azara had declared it Paraguayan territory). The Paraguayans drove the Brazilians from the Cerro Pan de Azúcar (north of the Apa at 21° 11'), which did not improve relations between the two countries, but no clear boundary arrangements were made.[27]

Demersay estimated the area of Paraguay at the time of President C.A. López at 28,770 square *leguas* (of 5,000 *varas castellanas*), or 539,437.5 km^2, divided as follows:

Area between the Paraguay and the Paraná	10,413 leguas	= 195,243.75 km^2
Area claimed in the Chaco	16,537 leguas	= 310,068.75 km^2
Area claimed between the Paraná and the Uruguay	1,820 leguas	= 34,125.00 km^2
Total	28,770 leguas	= 539,437.50 km^2

[25] Benítez 1990:147-8; López 1987:28; Nickson 1993:387; Whigham 1991a:67.

[26] Areces & Bouvet 1987:114; Machuca Martínez 1951:30.

[27] Kegler de Galeano 1995 (=1976):709.

The figures show that Paraguay claimed a very large part of the Chaco, if not the whole of it, at that time.[28]

A new and - for this study, final - *desmembración* took place in the 1870s as a consequence of the dramatic outcome of the war with the Triple Alliance. Under the border treaty concluded with Brazil on 9 January 1872, known as the Loizaga-Cotegipe Treaty, Paraguay lost the territories which it still formally held north of the Río Apa and behind the Cordillera de Amambay and the Cordillera de Mbaracayú. They became part of the Brazilian Mato Grosso. Under a border treaty signed with Argentina on 3 February 1876 (the Machaín-Irigoyen Treaty), Paraguay lost in the west the area between the Río Bermejo and the Río Pilcomayo and, in the south-east, the region of the five former mission villages east of the Paraná. This *desmembración* meant a loss of territory of 62,325 km^2 to Brazil and of 94,090 km^2 to Argentina, making up a total of 156,415 km^2. Argentina initially also claimed the area between the Río Pilcomayo and the Río Verde, but thanks to arbitration by the American President Hayes - in 1878 - this part of the Chaco remained in Paraguayan hands. The border with Bolivia remained undefined. The territory that Paraguay possessed in 1878 covered about 317,000 km^2. Paraguay did not achieve its present extent (406,752 km^2) and present borders until after the Chaco war (1932-36).[29]

To sum up, we may say that from the beginning of the sixteenth century the *provincia gigante de las Indias* underwent a considerable contraction, as a result of which the Paraguay of 1876 comprised no more than a fraction of the territory that had been allotted to *adelantado* Pedro de Mendoza in 1534 as a field of operations. The principal winners were Brazil and Argentina, but Bolivia and Uruguay also owed their territories - directly or indirectly - to one or more *desmembraciones*; Venezuela and the three Guyanas possibly also. All the areas which were eventually lost were peripheral or even extremely peripheral regions, seen from Asunción. The greater part of them had been scarcely, if at all, brought under

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[28] Benítez 1990:201. These area figures were later used in France by the Count of Brayer to compile a map of Paraguay.

[29] Gelly 1926:32; Kleinpenning 1992:476; Machuca Martínez 1951:34-5; Nickson 1993:350,360.

Fig. 3.6. The territorial losses of Paraguay after the war with the Triple Alliance (after Benítez 1995:64; Nickson 1993:xx; Vasconcellos 1970:109).

control and colonised by the Spanish who had established themselves in Paraguay. Where they had been colonised (as in el Guairá) the occupation was a temporary one. The Chaco formed an exception: this region also remained virtually uncolonised in the period

up to 1870 and so remained a periphery, but it was nevertheless largely retained by Paraguay.

What finally survived as Eastern Paraguay (*Paraguay Oriental*) was also the area which had formed the centre of gravity of colonisation from 1537. This core area of the *provincia gigante*, which largely corresponded with the borders which Eastern Paraguay had assumed in about 1811, forms the centre of interest of this study; the 'periphery' is discussed only insofar as actual activities were undertaken there and then only for as long as it formed part of the province (country) of Paraguay.

Surface forms, altitude and climate[30]

The eastern edge of Paraguay (as defined since 1876) is formed by a tableland ranging from 300 to 600 m in altitude and forming part of the Paraná plateau[31] that extends mainly into Brazil. It is built up from dark-coloured volcanic deposits, interspersed with layers of red sandstone. It is bounded by an escarpment that starts in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul and continues into Paraguay. The Río Paraná flows from north to south across this plateau from the Guairá falls (which have now disappeared) to Encarnación and Posadas and has incised a deep, gorge-like valley into the lava deposits.

West of the escarpment, as far as the Río Paraguay, granites, gneisses and other crystalline rocks of the Brazilian highlands (that are covered farther to the east by the deposits of the Paraná plateau) come to the surface. In most places they form gently undulating hills. As we shall see, a high proportion of the population has long been concentrated in the area of these crystalline rocks. The re-

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[30] The following section is largely derived from Kleinpenning 1987:7-11. A more detailed account of the natural environment is to be found in Stoltenberg 1927. See also: Cardozo 1991:25-45; Wilhelmy & Rohmeder 1963:18 *et seq.* The natural characteristics of the area that lies within the present borders are the most important, which is why only these are discussed in the following section. Where the physical characteristics of the lost peripheral regions are also of relevance, these are described in the appropriate place.

[31] Referred to in Paraguay as the Amambay plateau.

mainder of Eastern Paraguay consists of flat alluvial lowlands, an important characteristic of which is that, as a consequence of high rainfall and floods, they often suffer from an excess of water. The lowlands reach their widest extent in the southwest, near the confluence of the Paraguay and the Paraná. Near both rivers there are levees and marshy hollows (*bañados*), which gradually dry out only in the dry season.

West of the central river - in the Chaco -, except for a few small inliers of older material (such as the Cerro León and the Cerro Olimpo), the terrain consists wholly of alluvial plains of sand, loam and clay, brought down by rivers flowing from the Andes. From the foothills of the Andes the terrain slopes gradually down towards the Río Paraguay.

It can be deduced from this simple sketch of the geological structure that the highest parts of the country are situated in the east (Fig. 3.7). Between Pedro Juan Caballero and Salto del Guairá are situated the Cordillera de Amambay and the Cordillera de Mbaracayú, which have formed the border with Brazil over a length of about 320 km since 1872. Here are to be found the country's highest points: the Cerro San Rafael (850 m), the Cerro de Acatí (720 m) and the Cerro Ponta Porá (700 m). Farther to the south are to be found the Sierra de San Joaquín, the Cordillera de Ybytyruzú and the Cordillera de San Rafael, which are sometimes also jointly referred to as the Cordillera de Caaguazú. They form the somewhat wandering watershed between the basin of the Paraná and that of the Paraguay and also form the eastern edge of the Paraná/Amambay-plateau. Their average height is considerably lower, no more than 400 m. The ridges which occur elsewhere in Eastern Paraguay, such as the Cordillera de los Altos, the Serranía de Ybytypané and the Serranía de la Cordillerita (east and south of Asunción) are relatively small in extent and have an altitude of only 200-350 m above sea level. The remainder of the country consists of hills of less than 200 m in height or is virtually flat lowland. Near the Río Paraguay, the land is below 100 m above sea level. The average altitude of the Chaco, which slopes up gradually to the west, is 130 m. The principal elements determining the relief in the Chaco are water-filled hollows of no more than four to six metres

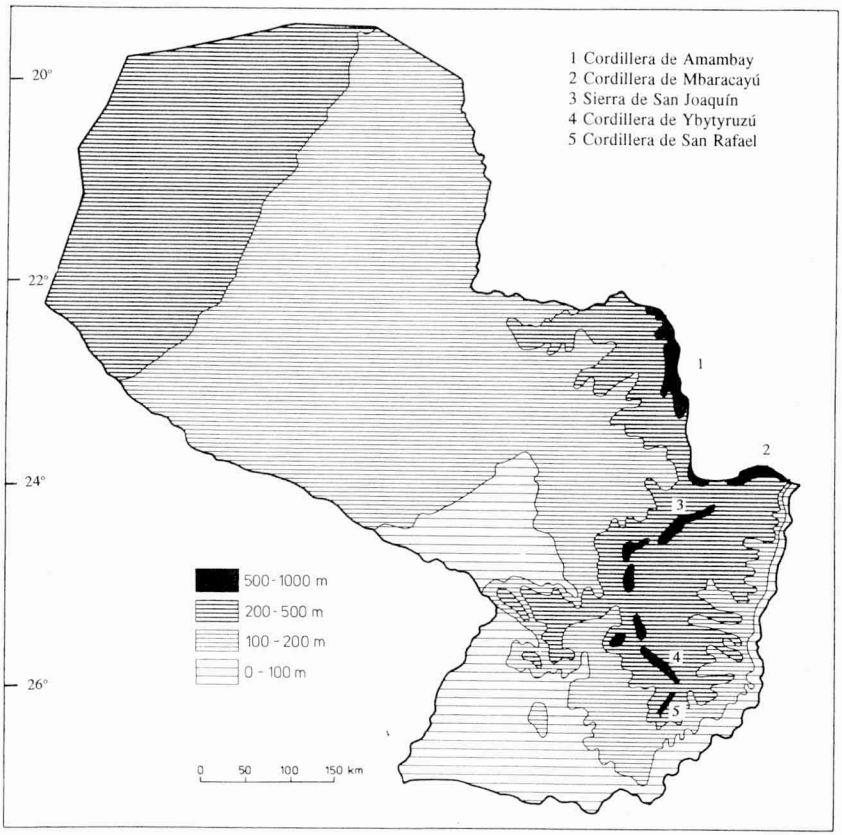

Fig. 3.7. Relief map of Paraguay (after Kleinpenning 1987:8; 1992:12).

in depth (*campos de agua*) and a few dunes, together with a few older geological inliers. The micro-relief consists mainly of an alternation of old abandoned river channels, depressions and natural embankments. Taken as a whole, this means that more or less flat lowlands make up more than two-thirds of Paraguay. They are situated mainly in the west; the Chaco is a vast, monotonous plain.

The rainfall decreases gradually from east to west. In the present eastern border department of Alto Paraná the average rainfall is 1800 mm. In the vicinity of Asunción an average of 1200-1300 mm is recorded while, in the western Chaco, the rainfall is no more

than 500 mm (Fig. 3.8). The period from September/October to March/April is the rainy season; while much less rain falls during the period from May to September. Drought is seldom a problem in Eastern Paraguay, but the situation is different in the Chaco. The low precipitation, high evaporation and the permeability of many of the soils result in a considerable water shortage each year during the dry season. Many of the rivers dry up wholly or partly, leaving at most a few trickles and small pools. Only the Río Pilcomayo in the south flows permanently, as does indeed the Bermejo in Argentina. In the rainy season, on the contrary, floods often occur in the lower parts of the Chaco. The area around the confluence of the Paraguay and the Pilcomayo, in particular, is notorious for them. The high water level of the Río Paraguay in the rainy season often results in the water of the Pilcomayo and various smaller rivers being dammed up, creating extensive morasses and lagoons.

The average annual temperature varies, from south to north, from 21 tot 26° C. The warmest months are December to February, and the coldest June to August. The average temperatures lie between 15 and 20° C in winter, and above 20° C in the summer, when values above 30° are certainly not uncommon. In Asunción, maxima of around 40° C may even occur. The weather can be particularly unpleasant, especially when there is little or no wind and the humidity level is high.

Since Paraguay is not protected by east-west mountain ridges, both tropical and colder air masses can easily reach the country. The tropical air masses are warm and usually also humid, while the air masses from the south (*pampero*), on the contrary, are cold and generally dry. As a result, rapid temperature changes are not abnormal. The mercury may quickly fall by 10 to 15° C on the passage of a cold front,

Not only does the average temperature increase from southeast to northwest, but the extremes also become greater. The Chaco is characterised in the summer by temperatures of up to over 40° C, but in the winter the temperature can fall to near or under the freezing point. The most extreme observations were made in Pedro P. Peña (department of Boquerón), where a minimum temperature of -7° was recorded and a maximum of 45° C.

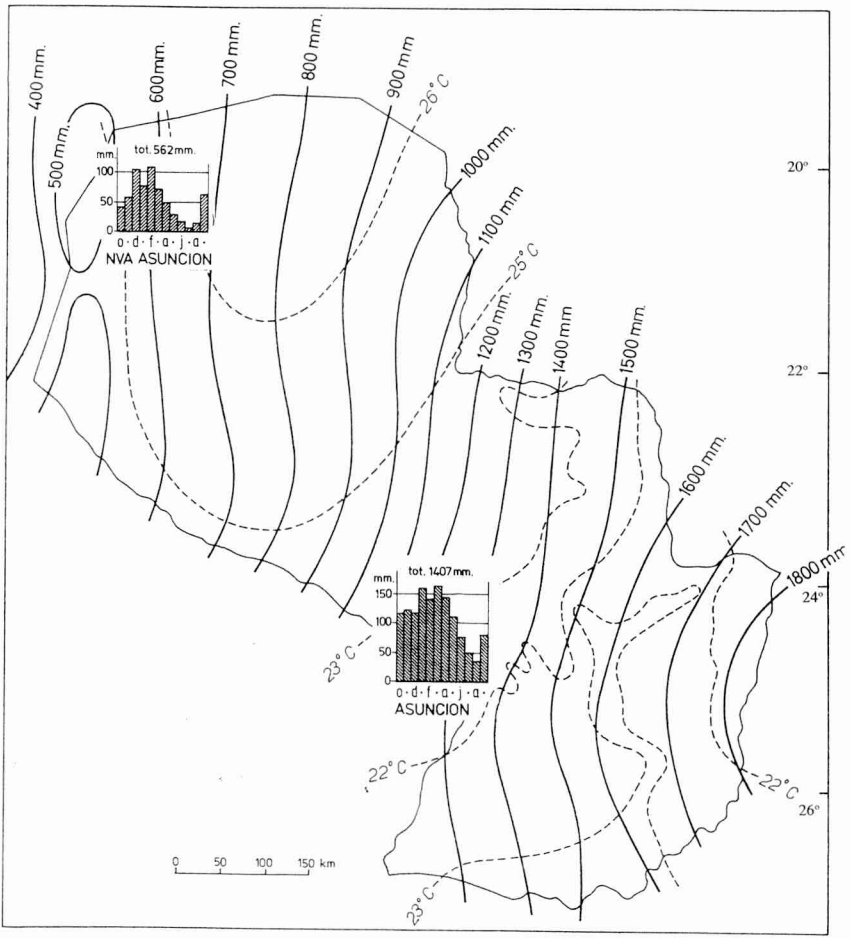

Fig. 3.8. Temperature and average annual rainfall distribution in Paraguay (after Kleinpenning 1987:9; 1992:8).

Frost is rare in Paraguay. Apart from certain parts of the Chaco, the greatest chance of frost occurs in the south of the country, but there the risk is limited to the period from May to September (an average of five days with frost).

On the basis of these characteristics the climate may be described as subtropical, except that it has a more tropical character in the summer, especially in the northwestern part of the country, which is situated within the tropic of Capricorn.

Natural vegetation, soils and minerals

The natural vegetation closely reflects the climate, in particular, the rainfall regime. The wet eastern departments were naturally covered by a partly evergreen, partly deciduous subtropical vegetation of tall broadleaved trees (*selva*). In the more humid parts and on the lava soils of the Paraná plateau, the forest was originally very dense, especially on the margins (e.g. along a river), where the vegetation could form an almost impenetrable wall. On the sandy soils of the plateau and in the crystalline hill country, on the other hand, the forest was naturally thinner and lower, but it was often still far from easy to cut a path through it. West of the Paraná plateau natural savannas (*campos*) also occurred. On the wetter soils these often consisted only of tall, tough grasses, but in other places the grass could be succulent. The *campos* usually consisted not only of grasses, but also of small woodlands and scattered trees (including palms). Where the terrain was not wholly covered by forest, trees were always to be found growing along the watercourses. At the time of the Spanish discovery, probably 80-85 per cent of Eastern Paraguay was covered by more or less dense forest. The neighbourhood of Asunción was described as being very well-wooded. The country was still well-wooded towards the end of the colonial period, as appears from the travel accounts of Azara and Aguirre.

The Chaco is dominated by a completely different type of vegetation: scrub woodland, that is still quite dense in the east, but gradually becomes more open towards the west and shows more xerophytic characteristics. Much of the natural vegetation consists of low thorny trees and shrubs, which provide very little shade from the often pitiless sun. In the moister eastern Chaco, many palms occur and there were also many *quebracho* trees, which could supply hardwood and tannin. More to the northwest, giant cactuses become increasingly common. On the sandy soils, the low woodland and scrub give way to *campos* of hard, tough grasses,

which can grow to nearly a metre in height and are inedible to cattle, although the latter can feed on the young grass that shoots up after the burning off of the old vegetation. Some of the vegetation in the Chaco is halophilic in character. The alternation of woodland and scrubland with open grassland gives a parklike appearance to many areas.

The soils of Eastern Paraguay are generally suitable for arable farming. The humus-rich (volcanic) weathering soils of the present eastern departments of Amambay, Canindeyú, Alto Paraná and Itapúa possess the highest fertility for this purpose and therefore lend themselves excellently for the production of a great number of crops. In the period up to 1870, however, they remained virtually unreclaimed. Elsewhere in Eastern Paraguay the fertility is in general lower and more frequent application of fertiliser is required, unless the land is rested. Moreover, in the lower-lying areas, like those of the departments of Ñeembucú and Misiones, measures must be taken to improve the drainage and reduce the flood danger, which is why preference is given in these areas to livestock farming. Because of poor drainage, flood risks, an unfavourable mineral composition or a combination of these conditions, most of the soils in the Chaco are more suitable for use as grazing land than for arable farming. In fact, no more than 13 per cent of the Chaco is considered to be naturally moderately suitable for arable farming, but because of the unfavourable rainfall regime, it would have to be practised in most places with the help of irrigation.

Paraguay has little to offer in the way of minerals. Only small quantities of (low grade) iron, manganese, copper and zinc ore are to be found, so that a significant mining industry has never developed. On the other hand, Paraguay does possess raw materials for the manufacture of building materials, such as bricks and tiles.

The two macro regions

The foregoing description showed that, in broad outline, Paraguay can be divided into two, strongly contrasting, natural macro regions: *Paraguay Oriental* and *Paraguay Occidental* (the Chaco), lying east and west of the Paraguay river, respectively.

Paraguay Oriental has relatively greater relief, but this has not made agricultural land use impossible, since plateaux, gently undulating hill country and low-lying flat land predominate. The precipitation is mostly adequate and even abundant in the eastern border region. The rainfall is, moreover, fairly evenly distributed over the year, so that droughts are generally rare. The summers are warm and the winters mild. There are numerous rivers and streams which can be tapped for water supply or used for navigation, while the groundwater is of good quality. Most of the soils are suitable for agriculture. The more fertile forest soils lend themselves well to arable farming. The *campos* can also be used for that purpose, but are generally more suitable for livestock farming, certainly where they are covered with succulent grasses and leguminous plants and water is in good supply. Where the land is more accidented or the drainage is less good, the land can nearly always still be used for livestock farming. Eastern Paraguay is by no means unfavourable for this latter activity, but nor is it ideal for it, in view of the climate and the associated favourable environment for various livestock diseases. During the colonial period the absence of saliferous rocks or soils in some areas was also a factor that militated against livestock farming.

An important favourable characteristic of Eastern Paraguay is that it contains woodlands harbouring various valuable hard and soft woods, such as *cedro, petereby, ybyraró* and *lapacho*, which can be used for building houses, churches, boats etc., or for other purposes, such as furniture manufacture. Besides all kinds of timber, the forests originally also supplied numerous medicinal plants, as well as plants from which dyes and tanning extracts could be prepared or plants from which fibres could be made. The natural diversity was so great that a real search often had to be made for other specimens of the same plant or tree. There was also much game in the forests, many varieties of fruit grew in them and the many watercourses contained fish. The forests consequently offered many possibilities for hunting, gathering and fishing. Those in the eastern part of the *Región Oriental* also contained wild *yerba* trees (*Ilex paraquariensis; Ilex paraguayensis; ca-á*), which grew in concentrations of varying size (*yerbales*). Its leaves were already used in the pre-colonial period for preparing 'Paraguayan tea'. In

the colonial period the *yerbales* soon became the most valuable resource of the eastern forests.

The *Chaco* - a plain with slowly flowing watercourses - is quite a different area. This region is characterised by high average temperatures and even intense heat. The temperature variations are greater than in the *Región Oriental.* What is more important, however, is that the precipitation is low to very low which, in combination with the high evaporation, gives the climate a sub-humid to semi-arid character. As in comparable regions elsewhere, the rainfall regime is characterised by unreliability, so that the annually recurring problems of survival during the dry season are considerably greater in one year than in another. Because of the small number of permanent rivers and streams, surface water is generally scarce, while much of the groundwater is unsuitable for agricultural use because of the high mineral content, especially in the eastern Chaco. In the northwestern Chaco the groundwater reserves are generally of considerably better quality, but occur in many places at a depth of as much as 100-200 m. During the rainy season, another set of problems related to the water economy occur when the lower-lying areas (which are situated mainly in the east) are affected by floods. Even then, none of the rivers are navigable. Poor savannas and low-grade woodlands form the natural vegetation of the Chaco. Many soils are more or less saline, so that salt efflorescences occur during the dry season. The Chaco is, in fact, only moderately suitable for livestock farming and largely unsuitable for arable farming. Moreover, the woodlands are much poorer in useful plants, game, and fish waters. One of the most important resources - *quebracho* wood - was virtually unexploited in the period up to 1870 and has largely disappeared through overexploitation since the beginning of the twentieth century. Road building is hindered today by the absence of stone and gravel, but this did not form an obstacle in the period up to 1870. Taken altogether, the Chaco is not at all a favourable environment for human occupation. Particularly in the colonial past, it imposed numerous limitations on human activity. Travellers passing through it in the dry season ran every risk of dying of thirst and were exposed to the burning sun, because the vegetation offered scarcely any protection. The Chaco

was, in fact, for a long time an inhospitable border region and zone of passage, and not an area of colonisation.

To sum up, we may say that the most favourable conditions for human occupation occur in Eastern Paraguay. The possibilities for agricultural production (in the broadest sense of the word) are in any event by far the most attractive here, which incidentally does not mean that they are always easy to exploit. Land reclamation was and is necessary, luxuriant weed growth was and is a permanent problem, floods could and do occur in the low-lying areas, and occasional droughts and plant diseases were and are still a hazard.

The great rivers

In addition to the two macro regions, separate mention should be made of the Paraguay and the Paraná - the country's two greatest rivers. Both rivers carry a sufficient volume of water to make them navigable at all times - although that was and is by no means always equally simple, certainly not during dry periods.

The Río Paraguay, which has a length from Bahia Negra to where it flows into the Paraná of 1,265 km, causes the fewest difficulties. No rapids or reefs occur in the river from 16°15' to where it enters the Paraná. The speed of the current is low, because the fall is no more than half a metre per kilometre. The course of the river is nevertheless broad and deep (apart from a few places such as Angostura), although it is winding. It did and does contain sandbanks and small islands, which divided (and divide) the river into usable and less usable channels, but in comparison with the Río Paraná, they were and are considerably fewer in number. Compared with the Paraná, the Paraguay river has a more even flow, which is largely due to the regulatory effect of a series of swamps and lakes in the Brazilian Mato Grosso. The highest water levels generally occur in the months of June and July. The Paraguay was at one time used by all kinds of vessels, from canoes and rafts to ocean-going sailing and steamships.

The Río Paraná flows from the Saltos del Guairá (which have now disappeared) to Candelaria through the hard basalt Paraná plateau in a deep and narrow gorge. This section of the river was

once navigated to a limited extent by the local inhabitants to above the Río Paranapanema and, later, also from the Jesuit missions, partly in order to reach the *yerbales*. Canoes and small boats were used for the purpose. This stretch of the river was not important for the regular navigation, however. The river broadens considerably from the point where it makes a sharp bend to the west - at Candelaria. Opposite the village of San Cosme, the river had a shoal (*arrecife*) known as el Salto and which caused no difficulties when the water level was sufficiently high. Farther to the west, there was another - much more notorious - shoal, that was impassable for river craft (Salto del Apipé). It was only from that point that the river was regularly used for navigation, although not without some difficulties, since the river flows particularly slowly, because the height difference between the Río Yguazú and Buenos Aires (a distance of about 1900 km) is only 100 m. Related to this is the fact that the river is rather shallow from Candelaria to its mouth and, especially from its junction with the Paraguay, strewn with numerous small islands, large sandbanks and shallows which hindered navigation. The number of obstacles became ever greater towards the mouth, until vessels found themselves in the labyrinth of the delta. The river shifted its bed from time to time and branched in many places, without it always being immediately clear which was the main channel or which was the best branch to use. Navigation of the river therefore demanded due expertise on the part of the pilots, especially during periods of low water. If they chose the wrong channel, this might mean that they ran aground or encountered other difficulties and, in any case, lost much time.

Besides these obstacles, river navigation was also hindered by floating tree trunks and other remains of vegetation, especially during periods of high water. Another difficulty during the age of sail navigation was the frequent occurrence of calms or unfavourable winds. The banks of both rivers were originally wholly forested, which provided a pleasant view and according to the historian from the early seventeenth century, Vázquez de Espinosa, was reminiscent of paradise. The vegetation caused considerable problems to shipping, however, since the crews were sometimes forced to tow the barges from the bank, and then the vegetation not only formed an obstacle, but could also contain all kinds of vermin.

Moreover, the topography was not always ideal. The banks are high in places and interrupted by ravines (*barrancos*), such as that of the Río Paraguay on the east side, or low and marshy, such as that of the Paraguay on the west side.

Because of all this, the navigation of both rivers demanded a great deal of knowledge, skill and perseverance. The navigators gradually learned the obstacles and problems and had already succeeded in reaching Asunción with ocean-going ships by the beginning of the sixteenth century. It nevertheless took five to six months to navigate the stretch from the la Plata estuary to Asunción (about 1610 km) during the colonial period. Navigating downstream was not much quicker. Overland transport was less difficult in some ways, but was affected by other problems and, on balance, it often required even more time than the difficult journey by river.

A favourable circumstance was that the rivers were rich in fish and that the Paraguay river also possessed a few navigable tributaries (the Jejuy and the Tebicuary).

Besides the Río Paraguay and the Río Paraná, the Río Uruguay was also used for navigation during the colonial period, although to a much smaller extent. This was partly because the river flowed through virtually uncolonised territory, but it was also partly due to the character of the river. There were extensive rapids on the Uruguay at Butuí, between Itaquí and São Borja and at Santa Rosa, just above the town of Salto. This succession of reefs and waterfalls formed a serious obstacle to normal river navigation. In the rainy season, when the water level was high, they did not form an insuperable problem, but in the dry season vessels had to be unloaded near the falls, their cargo transported some distance overland and then loaded into other vessels, an operation which obviously not only took some time, but was also expensive. The Río Uruguay does have a faster current than the Paraná and the Paraguay. The river was once used mainly by the Jesuits, especially for transport to and from Yapeyú.[32]

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[32] For these passages on the rivers, see: Cardozo 1989:15-6; Garavaglia 1983: 424-7; López 1975:36; Molas 1957:15-6; Vázquez de Espinosa 1969:447; Whigham 1991a:4,7.

The population of Eastern Paraguay in around 1515[33]

Eastern Paraguay was inhabited at the beginning of the sixteenth century by Guaraníes, which literally means warriors (Spanish: *guerreros*). The Guaraníes are counted as Amazonides (*Amazónidos*) and form part of the great Tupí-Guaraní linguistic family which had already spread out unevenly before the *conquista* from the Amazon basin over a large part of the area situated to the south.[34] The great majority of Guaraníes were to be found in the forest areas extending from the Atlantic coast over southern Brazil (Paraná, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul), northeast Argentina (Misiones and Corrientes) and the whole of Eastern Paraguay.[35]

The Guaraníes did not form an entity, but were broken up into different *parcialidades*, with their language forming the most important binding element. In the area that was soon to be known as Paraguay, the Spanish encountered on their arrival in the vicinity of Asunción (which was established in 1537) the Cario-Guaraníes. This was, however, only one group. Soon afterwards they would also come into contact with other Guaraní groups. According to Susnik, nine groups of Guaraníes could be distinguished in pre-Spanish Paraguay (Fig. 3.9).[36]

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[33] Since this study is a historical-geographical account and not an anthropological one and it also relates to the period from 1515, I do not present a detailed description of the pre-Columbian indigenous population, but confine myself to a brief sketch to serve as a background to the situation at the beginning of the Spanish colonisation. An extensive, detailed account is given in: Susnik 1978-82, Susnik & Chase-Sardi 1995:13-43. Brief summary accounts of the principal characteristics of the indigenous population of eastern Paraguay at the time of the discovery are given in numerous publications, including Bareiro Saguier 1963:445-51; Benítez 1955:25-58; Benítez 1985:11-6; Bertoni & Gorham 1973; Cardozo 1985:25-40; Cardozo 1989:23-39; Cardozo 1991:58-63; Cardozo 1994:20-2; Funes 1998; Galvez 1995:25-55; Mora Mérida 1974a; Ministerio 1987:9-11; Palacios & Zoffoli 1991:69-98; Pastore 1972:7-8; Roulet 1993:35-90; Service 1954:13 *et seq.*; Service 1966:223-4; Susnik 1982:11-61; Susnik 1988:31-50; and Ugarte Centurion 1983:35-40.

[34] For a summary of all the South American Guaraní groups, see Rolón Medina 1967:26-32.

[35] Velázquez 1981:32-3; Maeder 1997:2.

[36] Susnik, cited by Velázquez 1981:33; further, Cardozo 1989:23-4 and Susnik 1987:92.

a) the Itatines. They lived between the rivers Guaviañó (Apa) and Miranda in an area that now forms part of Brazil.

b) the Guairá or Guairáes, a very numerous *parcialidad*, who lived east of the Alto Paraná, in the region extending from the Saltos del Guairá (or Canindeyú) eastward between the rivers Tieté and Yguazú to the Atlantic coast.[37] Their territory became known in the early colonial period as el Guairá. We may also include the Ñu-Guaras, who lived in the outliers of the Cordillera de Amambay and on the banks of the Ivinheima, in this group.

c) the Guarambarenses or Ypanenses, a very warlike people who had established themselves in the area between the rivers Apa and Jejuy and in the *selvas* of the Mbaracayú.[38]

d) the Tobatines, who lived between the Río Manduvirá and the Río Jejuy.

e) certain small groups who had settled in the area from the Cordillera del Ybytyruzú to the distributaries of the Río Monday and along the right bank of the middle Tebicuary. These districts were inhabited by the Ybytyruzuenses and the Caraibá (or Caraibáes), respectively.

f) other small communities, designated as the Mondayenses, Acarayenses and Yguasuenses, who inhabited the basins of the rivers Monday, Acaray and Yguazú as far as their mouths in the Alto Paraná.

g) the Carios or Carió. They inhabited - in the *comarca* of the later Asunción - a fairly broad strip of land east of the Río Paraguay between the Río Manduvirá and the Arroyo Caañabé (including lakes Ypacaraí and Mayraru and the Yaguarí and Salado *arroyos*). Their territory extended in the southeast to the *campos* of southern Paraguarí, i.e. to the Río Tebicuary and thus also included

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[37] The area north of the Tieté was the territory of the Tupí, who were related to the Guairáes, but lived in discord with them, a situation which the Portuguese would later from time to time gratefully exploit (Susnik 1987:94; Chaves 1976:19).

[38] The Guarambarenses and Ypanenses are also distinguished as two separate groups. The former were reported as living between the Río Apa and the swamps of southern Ypané; the latter between the Río Ypané and the Río Jejuy.

the district of Acahay and Quiindy. The largest concentration was settled south of the rivers Salado and Piribebuy.

h) the Paranáes or Paraná, who had settled in the region between the Río Tebicuary and the Río Paraná (Ñeembucú) and south of the Paraná in the vicinity of this river (present-day Corrientes).

i) the Tapes or Tapé, living between the Río Grande and the Río Uruguay and along both banks of the latter river, in an area that now forms part of Brazil (Rio Grande do Sul) and Argentina (Misiones).[39]

According to Mora Mérida, three areas had important concentrations of Guaraníes at the beginning of the sixteenth century: the area in the southeast near the Río Paraná and its tributaries (around the later Encarnación), the central region near the Río Paraguay (east of the later Asunción) and el Guairá (east of the Alto Paraná).[40] The largest concentration of Guaraníes was probably to be found in el Guairá. According to Paraguay's first historian, Ruy Díaz de Guzmán, about 200,000 Indians lived here at the time of the Spanish conquest (see Chapter 5). Garavaglia assumed that the population of el Guairá numbered about 150,000 persons, and that the equally populous region of el Tape had perhaps 100,000 Indians.[41] The Carios were also quite numerous, although less so than the population of el Guairá. During the period of Governor Martínez de Irala some 100,000 Guaraníes were probably living within a radius of about 50 *leguas* around Asunción.[42] Unfortunately, nothing can be said with certainty about the total number of Indians living in whole area east of the Río Paraguay. Service assumed that Steward's estimate, based on detailed calculations for the individual tribes, of about 200,000 Guaraníes for the whole of Eastern Paraguay and southern Brazil was probably the most reliable. Steward calculated a population density of about 28 per 100 km^2 in central Paraguay and of 33 per 100 km^2 along the Alto Paraná. According

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[39] As we shall see below (Chapter 6), the later Jesuit missions were populated mainly by Paranáes, Tapes and Guairáes who had migrated southwards under pressure from the *bandeirantes*.

[40] Mora Mérida 1974a:348.

[41] Garavaglia 1983:163-4.

[42] Susnik 1995 (=1964):2.

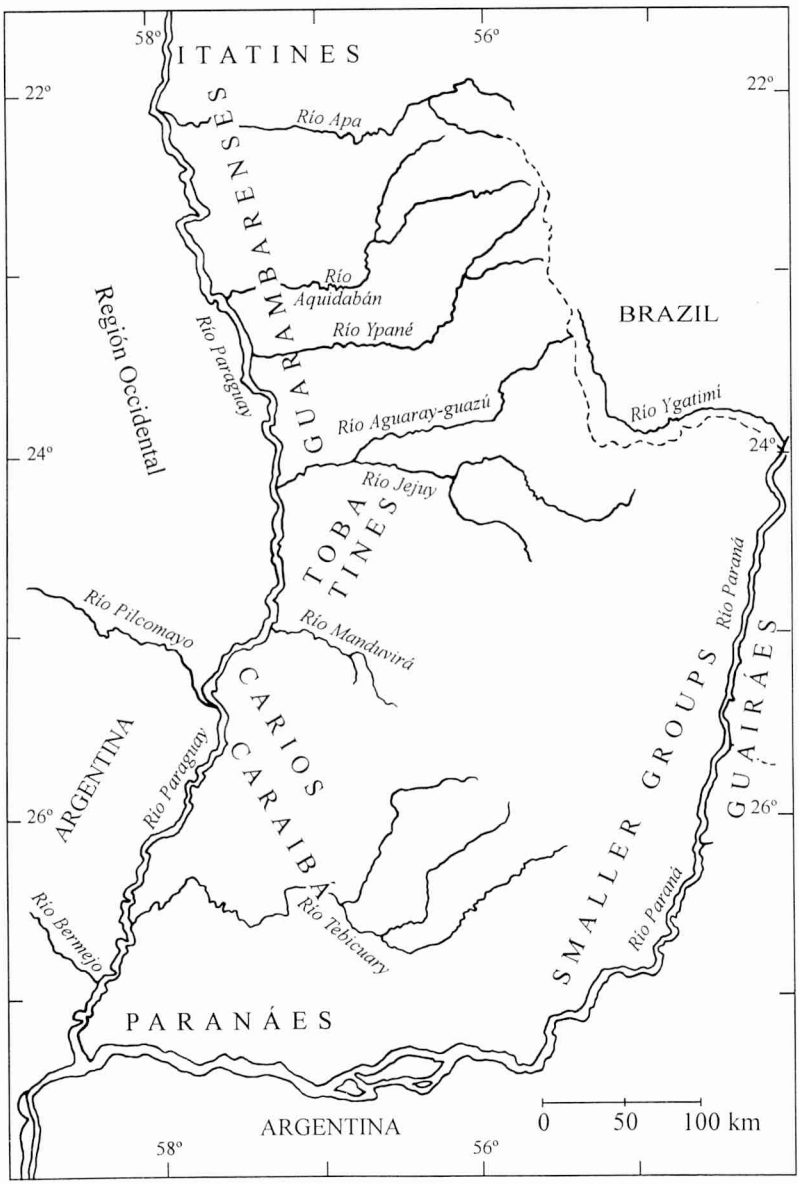

Fig. 3.9. The Guaraní groups living east of the Río Paraguay at the beginning of the sixteenth century (after Durán Estragó 1987:299; Necker 1990:259).

to Service, the earliest Spanish documents give the impression that the Guaraníes were concentrated mainly in the neighbourhood of the Paraguay river (in the region around the later Asunción) and that the eastern 'interior' was less densely populated. In view of the tendency of indigenous population groups to concentrate along rivers (with their regularly inundated and therefore more fertile soils, possibilities of communication and presence of fish), this is not improbable. That might also explain the relatively large population in el Guairá, east of the Río Paraná, and that in the neighbourhood of the later Encarnación.[43] Other estimates are somewhat higher. Whatever the true situation, there were never many more than 3-400,000 Guaraníes living in the region between the Río Paraguay and the Atlantic coast. What is certain in any case is that the indigenous population was considerably larger than the group of a few hundred Spanish *conquistadores* who appeared on the scene after 1535.

It should be stated for the sake of completeness that the area east of the Paraguay was also inhabited by small numbers of palaeolithic hunting and gathering peoples. In numerical terms, however, these were completely eclipsed by the early neolithic, farming Guaraníes. The most important group who must be mentioned here were the Guayakí. They lived scattered in the forests (*selva*) of 'el Caaguazú' (northeastern Paraguay). Vellard (1939) described their culture as *une civilisation du miel* (*una civilización de la miel*), but this does not mean that they collected only honey and did not engage in any other gathering activities.[44] Mention should also be made of the Mby'á (on the Alto Paraná, near the mouth of the Río Yguazú) and the Kaingang-Gés (in the Paraná region). In view of the small significance of groups such as the Guayakí, the following description of the indigenous population is limited to an account of the early neolithic, farming Guaraníes.

These Guaraníes practised shifting cultivation on small fields which they had cleared in the forest with the help of fire. The

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[43] Service 1954:14; Steward 1946-50,5:659,662, Map 16; also Massare de Kostianovsky 1970:209; Pastore 1997a:331.

[44] Chaves 1976:18; Vellard 1939.

deforestation was done communally, after which the land was individually cultivated by the households. The Guaraníes did not use any manure or irrigation, but allowed the fields to rest for a lengthy period (6-12 years) after tilling them for two or three years, and then cleared a fresh patch of woodland. There was no shortage of land, so that sufficiently long fallow periods could be observed. The standard of arable farming was low, not only as far as the techniques, but also as far as the implements were concerned. The only implement that was used after clearing the land (with stone axes and fire) was a wooden digging stick (*ybyrahacuá/yvyra hakua*) for planting the seeds or seedlings. Nevertheless, thanks to the relatively fertile soils and the regular clearance of fresh fields, the yields were reasonably high. The diversity of production was also relatively great. The Carios' harvests were in any event sufficient for them to be able to supply hundreds of Spaniards with food at the beginning of the sixteenth century, although this may have been at the expense of their own food supply.

All the crops were grown for subsistence and there was no trade in farm products. The principal crops grown included various varieties of maize (*avatí*), several varieties of manioc (*mandió*), the sweet potato or batat (*yety*), groundnuts (*manduví*), beans (including *porotos*), calabashes (*andaí* and *curapepé*), pumpkins and various fruits. The Guaraníes also grew cotton (*mandyjú*) for the manufacture of textiles and produced tobacco (*pety*), although the latter crop was probably used mainly in their magical practices; it was not used for everyday enjoyment. It was, in fact, the Europeans who turned smoking into a custom.[45]

At the time of the discovery of Paraguay, the yields from arable farming were probably the main source of livelihood, but they were supplemented by hunting (including deer and tapirs) and fishing. Both activities produced protein-rich food. The gathering of all kinds of forest products was also important. The Guaraníes collected, among other things, wild honey (their principal sweet), pineapples (*piña*), palm fruits, wild rice, pulses which looked like carobs (called *algarrobo* by the Spanish), medicinal plants, plants yielding

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[45] Chaves 1976:24-5.

dyes, and yerba. Not only these fruits and other forest products, but also fish and game were generally abundant, because the forests and waters of Eastern Paraguay were naturally rich. Wooden bows and arrows, spears, nets and wooden fishhooks formed the only hunting equipment.

Yerba leaves were not collected in large quantities, because it was only at the time of the Spanish domination that the use of *mate* greatly increased. The Indians did dry the yerba leaves, but not with the help of *barbacoas*; that was a later invention. They threw water over the leaves and the extract was used as a drink, which was actually consumed only during rituals and as a medicine.[46]

The Guaraníes did not keep livestock. According to Service, they had only domesticated the Muscovy duck.[47] They also kept dogs and hunted a kind of wild pig in the forests.

Food was produced only for short-term needs. No attempt was made to create a reserve for periods of scarcity, despite the fact that some products had good keeping qualities. In general, however, it was not necessary to create food reserves, because the Guaraníes exploited multiple resources, thus spreading the risk. Moreover, they could always migrate elsewhere if scarcity threatened. Some crops, such as manioc, also made stockpiling unnecessary, as its roots could be harvested throughout the year.

Each household had its own plots for growing maize, manioc and other crops. The communally cleared land was divided between the extended families in proportion to the number of women with children. Gónzalez commented that this gave the woman an important economic role, especially if she was or became a mother and so had a right to part of the land.[48] Besides the individually cultivated plots, there were also communal fields.

The Guaraníes had no detailed rules for the ownership and occupation of the land and forest. There were only a few simple use rights. The land of the *guára* (settlement) belonged to the community using it and could be used by the individuals of that community

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[46] Chaves 1976:24.
[47] Service 1954:15.
[48] Gónzalez 1984:11.

according to their needs. In other words, the Guaraníes were unacquainted with individual property rights over land or forest, such as prevailed in Europe. Such rights were, in fact, superfluous, since there was sufficient land and the fields were used for only a couple of years in succession. Moreover, there were sufficient resources in the woods and waters to supplement the yields from arable farming. Hunting, gathering and fishing were at least as important - if not sometimes more important - than agriculture. Individual property rights were limited to a small number of useful objects (bows and arrows, some earthenware, a few hammocks etc.).[49]

Besides primary activities, a few secondary (craft) activities were practised on a very modest scale. These were limited to the fabrication of simple, painted or unpainted, earthenware (such as bowls, pots, jars for storing *chicha* beer and urns), some textiles (including nets and hammocks), baskets and other plaited utensils and, obviously also things which were used during hunting and warfare, such as bows and arrows. Among the more important products made by craftsmen were canoes and rafts, which the Guaraníes used to move along the many waterways during their hunting and gathering and fighting expeditions. The Paranáes, in particular, were very skilled canoeists (and excellent swimmers, like many other Guaraníes). Use was made of reeds, straw, wood, the fibres of certain plants (such as the *caraguatá* and the *guembé*), lianas (*ycypó*), clay and stone for the production of handmade articles. Cotton was used for the fabrication of the few articles of clothing. These included the *typoi*, a shirt-like garment that enabled women to carry children on their shoulders. The Guaraníes did know of the existence of metals, thanks to incidental contacts with the Andes region. They also possessed some metal, including *planchas*, which had probably come into their possession via indirect exchange from the Andes region. But they did not dig ores themselves, nor did they process any metals. They used very simple tools for their crafts. The women, for example, used a hand spindle for spinning and small vertical looms for weaving. There was no trade in handicrafts; there

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[49] Caraman 1976:116; Gónzalez 1984:11-2;25,33; Kohlhepp 1973:55.

was, at most, some exchange of articles, but then mainly within the village. The production was very small in volume, because the needs were small. Very little clothing was worn, for example, except for a few loincloths, or not even those. People preferred to decorate themselves with feathers, or painted or tattooed themselves.[50]

The variety of resources and the activities associated with them had resulted in a simple division of labour. The men were engaged in hunting and warfare and they fabricated the necessary weapons (mainly bows and arrows, snares, lances, clubs and cudgels) for these. They also engaged in fishing and used stone axes and fire to perform the heavy tree-clearing work needed to lay out new fields. The women were responsible for planting the crops and harvesting them (usually helped by the children). They collected fruits, spun yarn and wove cloth, made simple pottery and basketry, fetched water and firewood, maintained the fire (that the men had laid), cooked, performed other domestic activities and prepared an alcoholic drink from maize, manioc or pineapples (*chicha*), that was drunk in large quantities on all festive occasions. All the members of the household worked, because the children participated at an early age in gathering and in the work in the fields.[51] The heavier and/or more extensive activities (such as clearing forest and house building) were very often done communally (the *minga* of a later period originates from this).[52]

As we have stated, in addition to arable farming, hunting, fishing and gathering, warfare was also an important activity, at least for the men; not for nothing did mean Guaraníes 'warriors'. Warfare was partly defensive in character, because the Guaraníes, especially those living in the neighbourhood of the Río Paraguay, were regularly in danger of being attacked by nomadic, palaeolithic Indian groups camped in the valley of the Paraguay or in the nearby Chaco. Because of their aggressiveness, the Guaycurú had even

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[50] Chaves 1976:23-4; Durán 1972:9; Necker 1983:8-9; Velázquez 1981:32; Roulet 1992:167.

[51] *inter alia*, Gadelha 1986:153.

[52] Meliá Lliteras 1996; Ortiz 1968:67.

become the archenemies of the Guaraníes. In the Paraná region, it was mainly the palaeolithic Kaingang-Gés who attacked the agricultural Guaraníes from time to time. The attacks, however, also provoked reprisals, leading to offensive warfare. In such reprisals, the Guaraníes tried to rob their opponents of their women, whom they used as hostages, or integrated them into their group or enslaved them in order to employ them for domestic work or agriculture. Roulet has emphasised that it was mainly warfare that led to external contacts and that war was also a means *par excellence* for people to distinguish themselves within their own group and so gain standing and prestige.[53]

No towns had grown up in the Guaraníes' territories. The population lived in small, mutually independent settlements (*tavas, teko'a, tekóa*; Spanish: *aldeas*, *pueblos*), which incidentally did not mean that the Guaraníes led a wholly sedentary existence. They shifted their settlements from time to time, usually in order to be able to live sufficiently close to newly cleared fields or other important sources of livelihood (such as new hunting grounds), but sometimes also because of disasters, or because events occurred which were regarded as supernatural. The villages and hamlets were generally situated near a river or stream in order to take advantage of the water supply, the possibility of river navigation and fishing, and sometimes also for greater security. The villages were not situated immediately on the water, but on somewhat higher ground as a precaution against flooding. Such a site often also gave a better overview of the terrain, thus enhancing security. In building a village, there was a preference for an open spot in the forest, so that no trees had to be cleared. The Guaraníes also preferred a spot with a ready supply of firewood and where there was an abundance of *tacuaras* (bamboo plants). The latter could be used for building houses (including the making of arches), as well as for making spears, bows and arrows.

Not all the Guaraníes lived in villages. There were also small groups who led a more wandering existence along rivers and streams, or away from them in the forests, and found shelter in

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[53] Chaves 1976:25; Plá 1963:132; Roulet 1992:168.

small huts (*chozas, ranchos*) made from a few tree branches, straw mats or skins, and which were highly portable.[54]

The true villages consisted of large communal houses (*ogas; og guazú*), called *galpones, cabañas* or *chozas* by the Spanish and *malocas* in the language of the anthropologists. The size of the villages varied. Some villages consisted of only one large communal house and were thus no more than a *casa pueblo*, that was surrounded by only a small number of plots. By contrast, other villages were true *pueblos,* because they consisted of four to eight communal houses and were surrounded by a considerable area of cultivated land. Some villages had a few thousand inhabitants, but these were exceptional. There were generally 40-200 warriors in each village.[55]

The villages were generally surrounded, for reasons of security, by a palisade of timber stakes (*corá*) and a number of ditches with snares and traps. Some villages had two or even three concentric enclosures of tree trunks as tall as a man. This had necessitated cutting down hundreds of *urundey* trees. The presence of such palisades demonstrates that the Guaraníes had to be on the lookout for surprise attacks, certainly those groups living close to the Paraguay river. The defences incidentally served to keep not only enemies, but also wild animals out of the village.

Where a village consisted of several houses, these were generally placed in a square or rectangle, leaving an open space in the middle that served various functions: a meeting place for the old people, a play area for the children, the spot where festivities and meetings were held, a space where certain operations could be performed, and the spot where enemies who had been taken prisoner were executed.

The houses were rectangular, were generally several tens of metres long (sometimes as much as 40-50 m) and were usually five to six metres wide. Each house was inhabited by an extended patrilineal family (*teví* or *tevy*; *linaje*), consisting of a head, his wife or wives, their children and the married daughters and their

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[54] Gutiérrez 1974:127.

[55] Durán 1972:7; Susnik 1995 (=1964):1; Tajima 1988:28.

husbands. The *tevií* therefore comprised several nuclear families. Some *tevy* were so large that the houses accommodated as many as 150-200 persons (40-50 households).

Some houses had an arched roof, others had a pitched roof. The roof extended down to near the ground. The walls were low and constructed of posts and other vegetable material (basketwork, that was sometimes plastered with loam). Roofing materials included reeds, straw, palm leaves or similar material. The framework on which the roof rested was constructed from bamboo or tree trunks lashed together with lianas (*ysypó*). There was an entrance at both ends of the house and in the middle. The houses had no or only a very few windows and contained very little furniture. The contents consisted of little more than some kitchen utensils (cooking pots etc.), a few benches, some hammocks and a few personal possessions, such as fishing equipment, bows and arrows. As well as serving as living space, the houses were used to store provisions. The *malocas* were not split up into single family dwellings. Each household inhabited a particular space, with the poles which carried the roof serving as open partitions.[56]

According to Necker, the *tevií/tevy* was the basic social and economic unit within the village. It was responsible for defence and for the communal performance of activities which exceeded the capacity of the individual household. The members offered each other mutual help with work, festivities and warfare. Membership of a *tevií* meant that each member had both an obligation and a right to help in such activities as hunting, fishing and, especially, tree clearing. The *tevií* formed a coherent unit in relation to the outside world. The village (*teko'a*) performed a less important economic function than the *tevií*. It possessed a territory and secured the resources within it, but it performed no function at the production level. Its function was more a political one, which became especially apparent during times of war.[57]

Each *tevií* had a head (*mburuvichá*), whom the Spanish designated by the term *cacique*. If a village contained more than one

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[56] González 1984:11; Meliá Lliteras 1978:161; Necker 1983:8; Service 1954:15.

[57] Necker 1983:9-10; Roulet 1992:166.

tevy, there were also several *caciques*. In such cases, they were probably subordinated to a general village head. The *cacique* gave leadership to the extended family in both peace and war. His duties included determining the group's external policies, taking economic decisions (such as the fair division of the cleared land between the families) and the maintenance of internal peace. As well as being the political and economic leader, he was sometimes also the religious leader (*payé*; shaman), but very often the villages had separate shamans. The *caciques* enjoyed respect, were obeyed and enjoyed certain privileges. The members of the *tevy* planted the *caciques*' plots, brought in their harvest and also reserved a share of the fish catch and game for them. The *caciques* had the right to claim the marriageable daughters of their subjects and consequently possessed a number of wives proportionate to their position. Some of them were said to have possessed 15-30 wives. Only the *caciques* could permit themselves the luxury of polygamy and polygamy was also accepted of them. The other men lived monogamously. A person became *cacique* through election by a council of elders, which was usually guided by the esteem that someone enjoyed for his fighting or other achievements. The position was not hereditary. *Caciques* could be deposed, for example, if they were considered responsible for a defeat.

Apart from the special status of the heads, the communities were otherwise highly egalitarian. Some social differentiation sometimes occurred where prisoners of war had been made into slaves.[58]

The various village communities were not united into any kind of federation. They were autonomous in relation to each other and respected - in principle - each other's territory. This does not mean that there was not sometimes rivalry or even outright conflict between the different communities. They did cooperate, however, in times of war against a common enemy, during migrations, in the exchange of certain products and in ritual celebrations.

A consequence of the autonomy of each village was that there was no national or regional political consciousness among the Guaraníes. There was, at most, a consciousness at the level of the

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[58] Chaves 1976:21; Durán 1972:10-1; Necker 1983:9-10; Service 1954:15-6.

parcialidades: each *parcialidad* demanded respect for its *guára* (territory), within which it built villages, laid out fields, shifted villages and fields, practised hunting or other activities. When the Spanish subsequently began to establish new indigenous villages (*pueblos-tava*) they, too, had to take this territorial principle - i.e. the existence of *guára* - into account.[59]

An important aspect of their spiritual culture was that the Guaraníes were monotheistic. They believed in an all-powerful Supreme Being (*Tupa, Tupâ*), who had always been and would be and was the Creator of heaven, earth, animals, forests and human beings. He lived in a paradise known as *yvaga*. The moon and the sun were his sons. This theology would ease their later conversion to Christianity. Besides believing in a God, the Guaraníes also believed in spirits with supernatural powers. They did not build any places of worship and made no images. They did have shamans, who sometimes had a greater hold on the villagers than the *caciques*. Meliá Lliteras has emphasised that the Guaraníes had a strong predilection for the religious and experienced their religion intensely, with singing, dancing, dreams, visions and prophecies. Religious motives also played a part in the cannibalistic practices in which they sometimes engaged.[60]

Although the Guaraníes were more developed than many other South American lowland groups (they at least practised simple arable farming), theirs could not be called an advanced civilisation that was more or less comparable with that of the Incas, for example. Their level of culture is generally characterised by such terms as *precivilizado* and *neolítico*. They had no script or alphabet. The number of tools was very limited and all of them were very simple. Apart from building simple houses, the Guaraníes practised no architecture; nor did they practise woodcarving or other forms of sculpture. They also practised very few skilled crafts. They made pottery and used various fibres to make textiles, but their pottery and weaving certainly could not be called advanced. This was undoubtedly also because the vegetation offered a number of 'vege-

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[59] Susnik 1987:92.

[60] Benítez 1985:14; Chaves 1976:26; Meliá Lliteras 1991:215.

table alternatives' (such as calabashes, which were not inferior to ceramic products as drinking beakers) and, thanks to the climate, people required very little clothing.

The Guaraníes had an excellent knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of their habitat. They knew the best places for fishing, hunting, gathering yerba and laying out fields. They knew nearly all the plants and their characteristics. They were also familiar with the wider environment beyond their immediate territory.

Some of the Guaraní population had migrated to the northwest towards the end of the fifteenth and during the first decades of the sixteenth century and had reached the outliers of the Bolivian Andes, the region of the Río Parapití and the Cordillera de Aguarague, the territory of the Chanés, that had not long previously become part of the Inca empire. As far as is known, the first migration towards the northwest had already occurred before the Inca Tupac Yupanqui came to power in 1471. A further great migration of Itatines and Tobatines took place through the Chaco towards the Parapití and the Cordillera de Aguarague between 1513 and 1518. Shortly before the Portuguese, Alejo García, started his journey from the Atlantic coast to the Andes at the end of 1524, a third expedition of Guaraníes was reported to have taken place. Those who participated in the first expedition, had not been liquidated as infiltrators and had not gone back, tried to settle on the spot. After the Inca had taken action against them, they eventually settled in the area of the later Santa Cruz. These Guaraníes were known to the Carios as the Chiriguanos (Chirigua-aná = the relations from the cold region). The Guaraníes (mainly Itatines) who took part in the second expedition and escaped the pursuing Inca troops, settled in the Llanos de Grigotá, which was situated somewhat to the north of the territory of the Chiriguanos, and where they came to be known as the Guarayos. The Guaraníes who took part in the third expedition largely returned, with the customary war booty (including slaves), to el Itatín. The inhabitants of the Guaraní enclaves in the foothills of the Andes were referred to by the Carios and other eastern Guaraní groups as the Caracaráes. Guaraní influence in the west (Bolivia) is apparent in place names such as Ysyporendá, Mandyyupecuá, Yrendague and Carandaity.

It was partly thanks to these migrations that the Chandules-Guaraníes who inhabited the islands of the Paraná and the la Plata estuary were familiar with the story of a certain Candiré (see below) and could tell it to the Spanish explorer Sebastián Gaboto. The Guaraníes of the Atlantic coast also knew of his existence. They informed the Portuguese explorer Alejo García, which led him to decide in 1524 to journey across South America to the mysterious 'Sierra de la Plata', accompanied by a large group of Indians. As we shall later relate (see Chapter 4), they murdered him in 1526, when he had nearly completed the return journey and had arrived back at the Paraguay river. It is known that Guaraníes again made the journey to the area of the Cordillera de los Chiriguanos (Charcas, Tarija) shortly after the murder. That was then (including the journey of Alejo García) at least their fifth migration.

The arrival of the Spanish led to an intensification of the contacts with the west, because the Spanish hoped to find a suitable route to Alto Perú, the 'Sierra de la Plata', with the help of the Guaraníes. When they learned, however, that some of their compatriots had already penetrated into the Inca empire and that the Chaco was not a suitable communication route, the Spaniards' trans-Chaco expeditions virtually came to an end and, with them, the possibility for the Guaraníes to participate in them. The contacts were largely lost and the western Guaraníes became more or less isolated.

Moreno relates the journeys of the Guaraníes to the fact that the Inca empire possessed a very desirable wealth in the form of metals, with which better utensils and weapons, such as fish-hooks, spears and arrows, could be made. The *Rey Blanco* (Inca ruler) was the *señor del metal* for the Guaraníes. But more important was the story in their mythology of the earthly paradise (*Yvy maraney, yvymara(n)e'y, mbaé verá guazú* or *tierra sin mal*), where they could escape the danger of a destruction of the world, where they did not have to work and where they would lack nothing. They associated this earthly paradise with the Inca empire, of which they had a vague notion and with which there had been both direct and indirect contacts; there were in any event some elements of the culture (such as gold and silver ornaments) to be found in Paraguay. The Guaraníes spoke of the *Candiré*, the lord and the land of

all good things, and were undoubtedly referring to nothing other than the Inca and his empire.[61]

The pre-1537 expeditions to the west were primarily a matter for Itatines and Tobatines; the Carios had taken part in them in much smaller numbers. But they, too, had a desire to migrate to the northwest. According to Morínigo, the Carios had migrated from the forests of the Paraná and settled in the vicinity of the later Asunción not so very long ago, and hoped to be able to migrate further at a suitable moment. At the time of the Spanish *conquista*, they were busy clearing the way by undertaking expeditions against groups like the Payaguás.[62]

> According to Susnik (1981), the Mbayás of the Eyiguayegi branch had also migrated as far as the pre-cordillera territory of the Chané-Arawak shortly before the *conquista*. The latter Indians practised intensive agriculture, were sedentary and lived in villages with several *caciques*. They were regularly attacked by the nomadic Mbayás, who lived mainly from hunting and, after the Spanish conquest, finally had to accept that they were dependent vassals of the Mbayás. They supplied their 'masters' with agricultural products and sometimes performed labour for them or supplied other services.[63]

Not only the area to the west, but also the area east of the Alto Paraná was no *terra incognita* for the Guaraníes of Paraguay. They knew, for example, along which routes they could reach the Atlantic coast from Paraguay, and *vice versa*. The Spanish would benefit greatly from this local and regional knowledge.

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[61] For the preceding account of about the migrations to the west see: Cardozo 1989:35-7; Chaves 1976:24; Durán 1972:12-3; González Torres 1995:116; Moreno 1941:44-7; Morínigo 1990:30; Necker 1983:14; Nordenskjöld 1917; Pastore 1983:55; Susnik 1981:23; Susnik 1987:82-3; Velázquez 1981:32-3; Velázquez 1992:38.

[62] Morínigo 1989:38-9.

[63] Susnik 1981:19-20; Susnik 1987:91-2.

The population of Western Paraguay in around 1515

Western Paraguay - the Chaco - was a very different region. This area was inhabited by warlike Indian groups belonging to other linguistic families than the Guaraníes.[64] The Chaco tribes formed part of the *Pámpidos* (so called because their place of origin was the southern pampas of South America). The *parcialidades* who inhabited the Chaco had not chosen their territory voluntarily, but had been forced into this inhospitable region by the rather numerous Tupí-Guaraníes and the Andes Indians. Traces of both these cultures were therefore to be found among the Chaco Indians.[65]

The contribution of the Chaco Indians to the colonial and post-colonial culture and society of Paraguay was slight, if only because they remained hostile to the Spanish for a very long time and avoided integration.

Partly because of their less favourable territory, the Chaco Indians practised very little agriculture. The majority of the groups did sow some maize, beans, sweet potatoes, water melons and other plants, mainly in the *bañados*, but this activity was on such a small scale and so simple and not always successful, that it could scarcely be called arable farming. The Chaco Indians were, in fact, primarily nomads who lived almost wholly from hunting, gathering and fishing within their *guára*. They preferred to camp near the river banks and other places with water. They kept no livestock, such as goats and chickens, but adopted them later in small numbers from the Spanish. After the sixteenth century the various Guaycurú groups even became skilled horsemen, because they also learned how to manage horses.[66] The level of culture of most of the Chaco

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[64] Since the emphasis in this study is placed on Eastern Paraguay, the Chaco Indians are discussed more briefly. For further details, see the anthropological study by Kersten, which was published in German and Spanish (1905; 1968) and deals mainly with the colonial period. See also the very detailed anthropological study by Susnik (1971). A briefer summary overview is to be found in Susnik 1986:7-31.

[65] Stunnenberg 1993:10.

[66] Stunnenberg 1993:11-2,17-8.

Table 3.1. The various ethnic groups inhabiting the Gran Chaco in the sixteenth century.

Linguistic group	Ethnic group	Alternative names (or subgroups)
Guaycurú	Abipón	
	Mbayá	Caduveo
	Mbocoví	
	Payaguá	Agaces, Cadigué (S), Sarigué (N)
	Pilagá	
	Toba	Qom, Cocolut, Aquilot
Mascoi	Angaité	Chanethmá
	Lengua	Enthlit
	Sanapaná	Sapukai
	Toba-Mascoi	
Lule Vilela	Lule	Tonocoté
	Vilela	
Mataco	Chorotí	Manjuy, Yofuaja
	Chulupí	Nivaklé, Ashluslay
	Macá	
	Mataco	Wichí, Agoyá, Tayní, Teuta
Tupí-Guaraní	Tapieté	Guaraní-Ñandeva, Chiriguano
Arawacan	Chané	
	Guaná	Chavaraná, Layana
Zamuco	Ayoreo	Moro
	Chamacoco	Ishir

Source: Stunnenberg 1993:12 (slightly amended).

groups has been described as 'palaeolithic'; only the Chiriguanos and the Chanés (Chaneses) (in the pre-Andes zone) and the Xarajes (on the Alto Paraguay in what is now Mato Grosso) are classified as neolithic, because they had learned to practise farming.

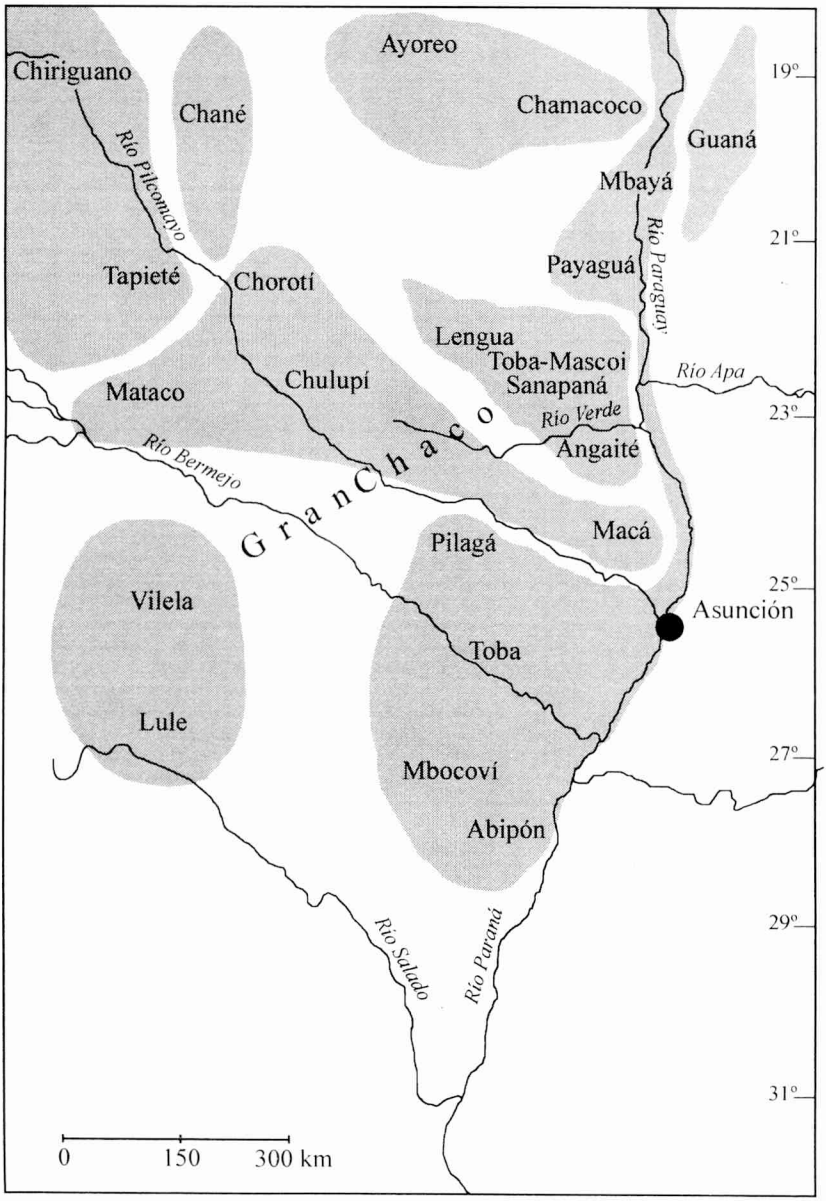

Fig. 3.10. Approximate territories of the Indian groups of the Gran Chaco in the sixteenth century (After Stunnenberg 1993:13).

The forms of subsistence practised permitted only a very low population density per square kilometre. There are no reliable figures of the population at the time of the Spanish conquest, but it may be assumed on the basis of the calculation made by Maeder that the population of the whole of the Chaco was around 180-185,000 persons in the opening decades of the seventeenth century. Some 87,000 Indians are thought to have lived in the area between the rivers Bermejo and Verde.[67]

Ignorant as they were, in the beginning, the Spanish made no distinctions and lumped all the Chaco tribes together: for them the Chaco was the land of the Mbayáes or Guaycurúes. They became aware after some time, however, that the Chaco population was divisible into a large number of different *parcialidades*, belonging to different linguistic families (see Fig. 3.10 and Table 3.1).

One of the principal *parcialidades* was formed by the Payaguá(es). They belonged to the Guaycurú linguistic family and camped at changing locations along the west bank of the Río Paraguay, as well as on islands in this river. The number of Payaguáes was estimated at at least 6,000 in around 1500. They subsisted from hunting, fishing and gathering and combined these forms of livelihood with occasional poaching expeditions into Eastern Paraguay, the territory of the Carios and other Guaraníes. The organisation of such expeditions was very simple, because the Payaguáes were not only excellent swimmers, but also made canoes (*arganaaks*) from tree trunks of soft *timbó* wood. These canoes could hold as many as sixteen persons. They propelled the canoes with short paddles and pointed sticks (which could also be used as weapons) and had developed a great skill in doing this. As a result, the Payaguáes could move at great speed and were able to travel long distances along the Río Paraguay, which they had no problems in crossing. In fact, they had complete control of the waterway; the other Guaycurú-groups (see Table 3.1) were 'landlubbers' by comparison. The southern groups (Agaces) operated roughly as far as what is now Santa Fe and also navigated the Paraná, where they came into conflict with the Guaraní-Paranáes, who - although they were

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[67] Maeder 1988b:302; for further details, see Chapter 32.

farmers - were also very experienced swimmers and canoeists. The Paranáes had to guard the mouths of the tributaries of the Río Paraná in order to prevent the Payaguáes using them as infiltration routes. The northern *parcialidad* of the Payaguáes operated as far as the vicinity of what later became Corumbá. The farming Xarayes on the Alto Paraguay were regularly attacked by them and found themselves forced to enter into peaceful relations with these skilled canoeists. In total, the Payaguáes controlled a length of river of about 1200 miles.

In the sixteenth century, the Payaguáes were originally called Agaces, Agaiz or Agaz by the Spanish. From about 1540, however, the *conquistadores* started to use the name Payaguáes or Payaguá, in imitation of the Cario-Guaraníes.

The subsistence activities we have described (hunting, fishing, gathering, canoe building, war and robbery) were the tasks of the men. The Payaguá women looked after the children, fetched water and gathered firewood, cooked, wove (almost certainly with fibres of the *caraguatá*, a kind of forest pineapple) and made simple cooking pots and water jugs. Like all the other Chaco groups, the Payaguá also engaged in an active barter trade with other Guaycurú groups, other Chaco Indians and occasionally even with the Guaraníes. In exchange for canoes they obtained arrows, bows, food and other goods.

The Payaguá sometimes entered into alliances with other Guaycurú groups living in the Chaco and even with the Mbayá in the north, in order to offer effective resistance to the advance of the Guaraníes; at the same time, therefore, they formed an extra threat to the latter.[68]

The various Chaco groups certainly did not always move around in the same areas. Their nomadic way of life constantly led them to migrate over varying distances and then to remain on a new site for a certain period. Thus it was that the Payaguáes and other Guaycurúes were engaged in about 1500 in moving from the south to a more northerly area. There were also migration movements taking

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[68] For the Payaguáes, see particularly Ganson 1989:especially 79-80,84-7; and Plá 1963:131; Susnik 1987:85.

peoples temporarily or permanently across the Río Paraguay. These migrations would also continue during the colonial period. The Mbayáes or Caduveos lived as hunters and gatherers in the Chaco at the time of the Spanish *conquista*. In the second half of the seventeenth century they would begin to cross the Río Paraguay and settle in the area north of the Jejuy, the former province of Itatín or Pety, which had become depopulated through their attacks and those of the Portuguese.[69] The Guaná (Chavaraná), which, as we have said, was an Arawak tribe subdued by the Mbayá, migrated in the colonial period to the area north of the Apa and penetrated to the northern part of *Paraguay Oriental*.[70]

The Spanish obviously had most contact with the Payaguáes and the other groups belonging to the linguistic family of the Guaycurú, since the latter were to be found closest to the Río Paraguay. It was mainly also these groups who had always lived in a state of permanent hostility with the Carios and other Guaraní groups. They had tried to supplement their scanty existence from time to time by raiding Guaraní villages and robbing the inhabitants of their agricultural products, particularly when they knew that there had been a good harvest. Their actions illustrate that robbery was often essential for the survival of a number of Indian groups in the Chaco, with their limited resources. They needed more and also different food. Particularly in the area around the later Asunción, this had led in the pre-colonial period to frequent conflicts between palaeolithic hunters and gatherers and neolithic farmers.[71] Usually on such occasions, the raiders not only seized food, but also tried to take women and children prisoner with the aim of sowing fear, supplying the tribe with labour - slaves - and having hostages with which to bargain for a ransom. Besides causing unrest in the villages, the attacks also made the Guaraníes fearful of fishing on the Paraguay. They therefore understandably regarded the Payaguáes as their archenemies. When the Spanish had settled in Asunción and its neighbourhood, the Chaco Indians continued their

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[69] Alvarenga Caballero 1995:199.
[70] González Torres 1995:119.
[71] Chaves 1976:17; Susnik 1981:19.

practices and also tried to plunder the fields of the Spanish, who would continue to be troubled by them until well into the colonial period.

PART TWO

CONQUEST, COLONISATION AND SETTLEMENT

Introduction

Chapter 2 sketched a global picture of politics and society during the major periods into which the history of Paraguay up to 1870 can be divided. Chapter 3 then discussed the geographical framework of this study: the areal extent of the province, later country, that has been known as 'Paraguay' since the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the principal characteristics of the natural environment. The same chapter gave an account of the indigenous population and their way of life in around 1500. These two chapters supplied the background against which the changes which Paraguay underwent after 1515 can be examined in detail from a historical-geographical perspective in the following chapters. In other words, I have now reached the subject proper of this monograph.

I start with an account in seven chapters of the colonisation and the associated foundation of settlements. In the early decades the *conquistadores* limited themselves to a number of reconnaissance expeditions and to the establishment of temporary support points and the town of Asunción (Chapter 4). The *conquista* phase ended by 1550 and a process of spatial dispersion began in the second half of the sixteenth century: new Spanish settlements were established far to the east, northwest and south of Asunción and, within *Paraguay Oriental*, numerous groups of Indians were brought together in *pueblos de indios,* which were set up mainly by the Franciscans. Mercedarians and Dominicans had already laid the foundation at that time for two settlements of blacks (Chapter 5). The settlement process in the first half of the seventeenth century was largely dominated by the missionary activity which the Jesuits were beginning to undertake in various regions. They eventually established

several dozen *pueblos de misiones*. Besides the remarkable mission activity of the Jesuits, the seventeenth century was characterised by repeated attacks of Portuguese *bandeirantes*, who were restlessly on the outlook for slaves, precious metals or other riches and wished to extend Portugal's sphere of influence. Consequently, few new Spanish settlements were established and such settlements as were founded were very small. The inhabited zone contracted and - apart from the Jesuit missions - the population became concentrated mainly in the relatively easily defendable region of Asunción (Chapters 6 and 7).

The eighteenth century presents a different picture. The number of Jesuit mission villages was expanded, various new Franciscan mission posts were set up and new Spanish settlements were established (Chapter 8). Particularly in the period from 1773, the Spanish were remarkably active in the establishment of settlements (Chapter 9).

The layout, appearance and organisation of the Jesuit missions, the *pueblos de indios* and the Spanish settlements are described in Chapter 10. That chapter concludes the section dealing with the colonial period. The further development of the settlement pattern during the post-colonial period up to 1870 forms the subject of Chapter 11, in which we show that only a few new settlements were added in the years 1811-70, that a number of mission villages even disappeared and that the first colony of foreigners ended as a fiasco.

A historical geography of Paraguay during the period 1515-1870 would not be complete unless it paid special attention to Asunción. This settlement was the principal urban centre throughout the period, and was really the only settlement deserving of the qualification 'city'. Numerous activities were concentrated here and many developments which took place in Paraguay were initiated and/or controlled from here. Chapter 12 therefore presents a picture of the growth, spatial structure and functions of Paraguay's primate city.

4

The period of the *conquista*

The first reconnaissances by Díaz de Solís, García and Magallanes

After Columbus had discovered America, the *Reyes Católicos* and the Portuguese King João II appealed to Pope Alexander VI for recognition of their countries' rights to the regions discovered thus far. Their initiatives led to the papal bulls of 4 May 1593 and 26 September 1593. Of ultimately greater importance was the Treaty of Tordesillas, that was concluded between Spain and Portugal on 7 June 1494. This treaty laid down that the areas beyond the north-south line running 370 miles to the west of the Cape Verde islands should be Spanish possessions and that the area east of that line should belong to Portugal. This meant in practice that the Portuguese sphere of influence would extend to the meridian of 48° 30' west of Greenwich, taking the line of Tordesillas roughly through São Vicente and Belém (Fig 3.1).[1]

After the Caribbean region and Central America had first been further explored and partly conquered, the Spanish voyages of discovery were directed more to the southern parts of the New World. In 1514, Juan Díaz de Solís, a Portuguese who was in the service of Spain as a chief navigating officer (*piloto mayor*), reached an agreement with the Spanish king, Ferdinand V, that he would reconnoitre the southern seas. The objective was to find a passage to the Pacific Ocean, that had been discovered by Balboa and so also discover a sea route to the Moluccas. He sailed from

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[1] Machuca Martínez 1951:2-3.

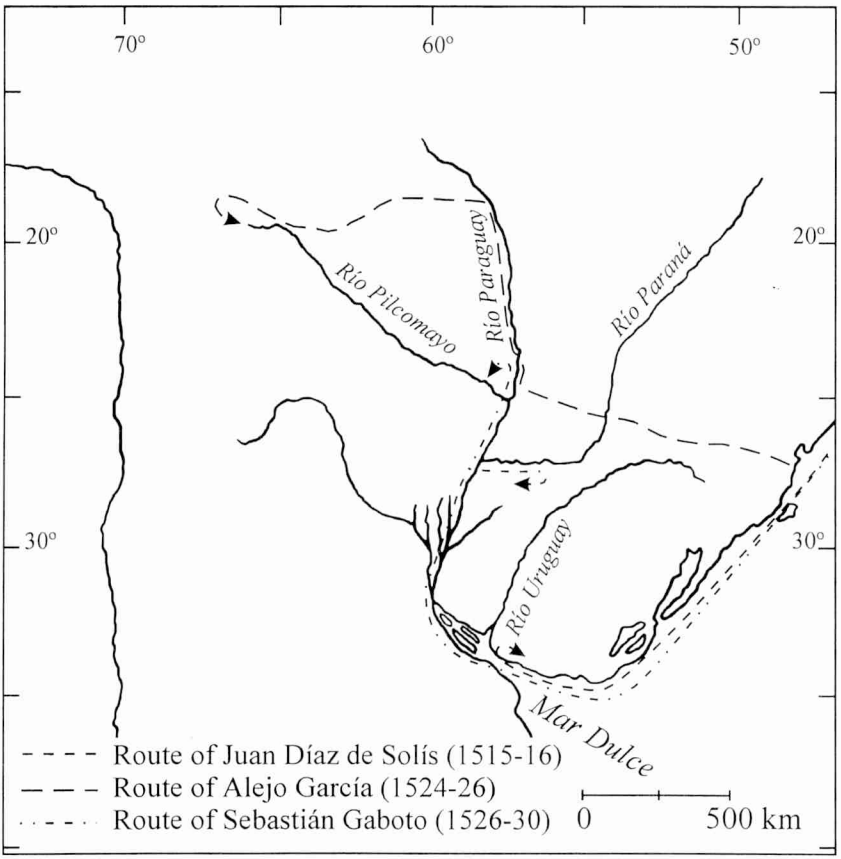

Fig. 4.1. Approximate routes of the expeditions made by Juan Díaz de Solís, Alejo García and Sebastián Gaboto during the early sixteenth century (after Machuca Martínez 1951:Maps 3 and 4; Nowell 1946:451).

Spain on 2 October 1515 with three ships, whose crews included a number of Portuguese, and arrived at the broad estuary that would later be called the mouth of la Plata in early 1516 (in January,

according to some authors, in February, according to others).[2] The explorers sailed some way up the Río Uruguay. Díaz de Solís named the island situated opposite what is now the city of Colonia, Isla de San Gabriel, and he called a small island lying farther to the northwest Martín García. Because of its fresh water, he called the wide la Plata estuary *Mar Dulce*; this estuary would subsequently be known for a number of years as the *Mar Dulce de Solís*. On the southwest coast of what is now Uruguay the expedition observed Indians, which led the Spaniards to go on land. Díaz de Solís landed with seven or eight of his companions in order not only to take official possession of the newly discovered territory in the name of the Spanish king, but also to take a number of Indians prisoner, which the expedition wished to take back with them to Spain. The precise place is not known, but it very probably lay a little north of the island of Martín García. After the men had landed, however, the Indians attacked them. All the visitors, except for the cabin boy, Francisco del Puerto, were killed and their bodies were eaten. This happened on 2 January 1516 or in February. The expedition members who had remained on board lost all desire for further exploration; they decided to return to Spain under the authority of Francisco de Torres, and arrived back at the end of 1516.

Not all of Díaz de Solís' ships reached their homeland. One of the vessels sank off the Brazilian coast near the island of Yurú Minrín (later called Santa Catalina). Eleven (perhaps 18) crew

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[2] The earliest history of Paraguay - the period until about 1550 - has been dealt with in several publications. Besides the works yet to be cited, reference can also be made to: Bordon 1928, Cardozo 1941a and Gandía 1932. For a history until about 1600, see also Chaves 1968 and Parts II and III of Lozano (1872, 1873). The *Anales* of Ruy Diaz de Guzmán, Paraguay's first historian (published in, *inter alia*, 1882) give a description in three *libros* of the discovery, the *conquista* and the foundation of the first towns (up to the foundation of Santa Fe). His work is an important primary source for the earliest history of Paraguay.

In the text of this and the following chapter dealing with the origin of the settlements, numerous geographical and place names occur which are derived from Guaraní. For an explanation of these names, see: González Torres 1995:84-188.

members succeeded in reaching the island and saving themselves. One of them was the Portuguese Aleixo (Alejo) García. The castaways managed to survive, thanks to the fact that they were fed by the local population and established good relations with them. They established a small settlement on the mainland, which they called Puerto de Los Patos.

In the course of time, the whites spoke excellent Guaraní and they heard fascinating tales from their Indian friends about a country with a mountain range rich in silver, rivers containing gold and other incredible riches. The country was situated far to the west and was ruled by a white king (*Rey Blanco*) who possessed great riches and wore costly clothes. It was, according to the coastal Guaraníes, the land of the Caracaráes, which could be reached via the territory of the Mbayáes (the Chaco). The region to which the Indians were referring was, in fact, none other than the Inca empire in Bolivia and Peru, which was then ruled by the Inca emperor Huayna Cápac; and the precious metals of which they spoke were those of Potosí (literally: mountain top from which silver emerges) and its vicinity or, in any event, those of the Andes in general. Potosí was at that time a pantheon of the Indians; the powerful Huayna Cápac suspected that the mountain contained immeasurable riches. About six or seven *leguas* southeast of Potosí was the hill of Porco, where the greater part of the silver that was used in the sun temple of Cuzco had been mined. It was the most famous mine during the Inca period, but the Europeans on the Atlantic coast could not have known that then. Nor perhaps did they have any suspicion that the tales which the Indians told them had passed from mouth to mouth and had been somewhat embroidered upon in the course of time.[3]

The fascinating tales led Alejo García after some years to set out to find the mysterious land in the west, the 'Sierra de la Plata'. He set out in the first half of 1524 with three other whites and a group of Guaraní Indians (Fig. 4.1). He passed through the present state of Santa Catarina towards the Río Paraná, following the beginning of an eight *palmos*-wide transcontinental link road used by the

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[3] Benítez 1985:21; Chaves n.d.:38-9; Domínguez 1996:93-4; Machuca Martínez 1951:4; Quevedo 1984a:176; Schmidel 1962 (Foreword by Plischke):IX.

Indians, which they called *peabirú*. García trekked through araucaria woods and subtropical rainforest, crossed the Río Paraná, probably admired the Yguazú falls and, in Paraguay, passed through the valley of the Río Monday to reach the Paraguay river, approximately at the spot where Asunción would later be established. At this place he was well received by the local Indians (whose language he spoke fluently) and he succeeded in persuading a large number of (warlike) Guaraníes to join his expedition by holding out to them the prospect of finding clothing, metals, useful objects and other riches in the west. His story was certainly not unfamiliar to them; they knew the stories about the *Sierra de la Plata*, *la tierra sin mal* and *Candiré* at least as well as García (see Chapter 3). The whole expedition probably ultimately included about 2,000 Indians, including *caciques* who led their subjects. The whites formed more the general staff.

The force first moved a considerable distance to the north along the Río Paraguay (through the territory of the Itatines) as far as the district of what is now Corumbá and then turned westwards, passing a *sierra* and a natural harbour, later called San Fernando[4], to enter the territory of the Mbayáes. The precise route through the Chaco is not known, but the expedition must often have had to beat off the attacks of hostile Indian groups *en route*, with varying success. Near the border with the Inca empire, contingents of Chanés and Tarapecocies, who were enemies of the Incas, joined them. The expedition eventually pushed through the Bolivian hills and mountains and crossed the border of the Inca empire between Mizca and Tomina, penetrating about 40 *leguas* (c. 175 km) into the empire, as far as the neighbourhood of the places Presto and Tarabuco, in what is now the department of Chuquisaca. Plundering, destroying and killing as they went, García and his followers sowed panic everywhere. In due course, they were met with organised counterattacks from Charcas mobilised by the Inca ruler, and

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[4] Puerto de San Fernando was situated in el Itatín at 19°20' S, north of the later Candelaria, at the foot of the Cerro Santa Lucía, on the right bank of the Alto Paraguay, about 50 km south of modern Corumbá (Fig.4.2). The Cerro San Fernando is situated opposite the Pan de Azúcar, a little south of present-day Fuerte Olimpo (Gónzalez Torres 1995:47).

the expedition leaders found it better to withdraw because of the local resistance. The withdrawal took place without panic or difficulties. They took with them as much valuable clothing, silver, silver vessels and crowns, copper objects and other valuables as they could carry. Thus no land was conquered and no settlements were founded; the expedition was limited to a reconnaissance and the capture of booty. The incursion incidentally did lead the Inca ruler to improve the defences of his empire on the east, partly because other groups of Guaraníes had already undertaken raids and plunder expeditions in the preceding period.

After an orderly, but exhausting, return journey via a more direct route, in which its members again had to contend with hunger, attacks and numerous other privations, García's expedition at last arrived back at the Río Paraguay, in the area from which many of the Guaraníes accompanying them originated. They struck camp on the left bank of the river, about 35 *leguas* north of Asunción, at a spot called Ycuá mandihyú and which would become the site of the small town of San Pedro at the end of the eighteenth century. From there, Alejo García sent out twelve Chaneses as messengers bearing letters and two or three *arrobas* of silver to his white friends on the coast.[5] The messengers had not only to bring reports to the Spaniards and Portuguese who had remained there, but also to persuade them to mount a new expedition to the mysterious land of the White King, but this was not to be. Shortly after the messengers had set off for the coast, Alejo García and his white companions were killed at the end of 1525 or beginning of 1526 by Guaraní Indians, led by the *cacique* Tavaré. The attack was partly the work of Indians who had belonged to García's expedition. The only motive seems to have been their desire to seize the riches and slaves acquired by the expedition.

Despite his tragic end, Alejo García was the first European to travel, together with three other Europeans, across a great part of the totally unknown South America, making him the first European to see part of southern Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia. He crossed the site of the later Curitiba 17 years earlier than *adelantado* Alvar

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[5] 1 *arroba* = about 25 pounds avoirdupois.

Núñez Cabeza de la Vaca, saw the Río Paraguay four years earlier than Sebastián Gaboto, travelled 13 years earlier through the Chaco, arrived 13 years earlier in the land of the 'White King' than Juan Ayolas, and entered Charcas 13 years earlier than the Pizarro's force (see below). However, his was a private expedition; the reconnaissances were not made in the name of the Spanish king.

Enrique Montes and Melchor Ramírez - two of the castaways who had stayed behind in Santa Catarina - received the messengers' letters and samples and told voyagers who called at Santa Catalina the stories of Alejo García, the land of the *Rey Blanco* and the *Sierra de la Plata*.[6]

Hernando de Magellan, a Portuguese seafarer in Spanish service, played a much less prominent role in the history of the discovery of Paraguay. He agreed with King Carlos V at the end of 1516 to attempt what Díaz de Solís had failed to do, i.e. to reach the Moluccas via a southern passage to the Pacific Ocean. His fleet set out in September 1519, reached the la Plata estuary in 1520 and reconnoitred the Río Uruguay. However, after the tragic fate of Díaz de Solís and his men, Magellan's crew did not explore the Río Uruguay further. Magellan set course to the south and did indeed find in October 1520 the desired passage (the Strait of Magellan, that is named after him), which enabled him to reach the Moluccas. As is well known, he was killed in the Philippines, but Sebastián Elcano completed the voyage. The latter returned via the westerly route, arrived in Spain in September 1522 and so successfully completed the first voyage round the world.[7]

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[6] For a detailed account of Alejo García's expedition, see: Nowell 1946. And further: Benítez 1985:22; Chaves n.d.:40-1; Cardozo 1967:11-2; Cardozo 1989:39-41; Cardozo 1994:22-3; Domínguez 1996:93-4;101-3; Kohlhepp 1973-74:51; Machuca Martínez 1951:6; Ministerio 1987:12; Nickson 1993:251; Quevedo 1984a:177-8.

[7] Chaves n.d.:39.

Further explorations by Gaboto

It was not until 1527, that a fresh attempt was made to explore the region of the 'Mar Dulce' more thoroughly. This attempt was made by Sebastián Gaboto, a Venetian who was appointed *piloto mayor* (or *cosmógrafo mayor)* in service of the Spanish Crown after the death of Díaz de Solís. Gaboto received a commission from Carlos V in the *capitulaciones* which were drawn up in March 1525 to set course for the Moluccas, Catayo and Cipango, making use of the knowledge gained by Magellan and Elcano.

Gaboto set out from the Spanish port of Sanlúcar de Barrameda on 3 April 1526 with three small ships and some 200 men (including a good many foreigners).[8] Because he was becalmed, he called in at Pernambuco in June, remaining there for some time, and learned the story already passed on by the Indians and others about the journey of Alejo García and the fabulous riches in the territory of the *Rey Blanco*, that could be reached via the 'Río de Solís'. Gaboto was advised to call in at Puerto de los Patos and gather more information from the few whites who lived there. He then already more or less decided to further explore the 'Río de Solís'. His fleet arrived off the island of Yurú-Minrín in October 1526. The island was an obvious place for all the ships navigating those waters to moor. Gaboto called it 'Isla de Santa Catalina'. There he made contact with Enrique Montes and Melchor Ramírez, who confirmed the stories about Alejo García and showed him samples of gold and silver. Gaboto then finally decided not to sail for the Moluccas. He considered it more attractive to explore the waters of the 'Mar Dulce de Solís' and so find a navigable route to the 'Sierra de la Plata', in the assumption that this mountain did not lie too far from a navigable river. He obviously had no knowledge of the exact distance and nor could he have. The expedition's flagship sank at Puerto de los Patos, but they built a galiot on the spot, that was suitable for coastal and inland navigation. Before the voyage was resumed, the captains Francisco de Rojas, Martín Méndez and Miguel de Rodas were left behind on the island of

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[8] Plischke (Foreword to Schmidel 1962:IX) refers to 4 ships and 250 men.

Santa Catalina, because they had opposed the change in the destination of the voyage.

In April 1527 Gaboto and the members of his expedition established a small settlement on what later became Uruguayan territory, and which he called San Lázaro. The settlement was probably situated on one of the islands situated close to the island of Martín García and which are now known as Dos Hermanas. There they met Francisco del Puerto, the cabin boy who had survived the attack on Díaz de Solís and his men. He confirmed the reports which they had received in Pernambuco and Santa Catalina. Two expeditions were launched from the support point of San Lázaro, where Gaboto stayed for a month. One expedition was led by Antón de Grajeda, who sailed up the Río Uruguay and established a settlement in June 1527 on the left bank, which he called San Salvador, on the territory of what is now Uruguay. This was situated at the mouth of a river that was given the same name. San Lázaro and San Salvador survived for only a short time, because the Spaniards were unable to beat off the attacks of the Charrúas. Moreover, they did not intend to establish permanent settlements, but only temporary support points. The second expedition was led by Gaboto himself. His ships sailed up the Río Paraná as far as the mouth of the Carcaraña (now Río Tercero). A small fortified settlement was built on the promontory formed by the confluence of the Carcaraña and the Coronda (a branch of the Paraná) on 11 May 1527 in the territory of the Chandules-Timbú. The settlement was christened Sancti Spíritus. This *fuerte* existed for a couple of years and is therefore regarded as the first European settlement in the la Plata region.

Gaboto stayed in Sancti Spíritus for about six months, left behind him in December 1527 a garrison of about 30 men under the command of Gregorio Caro and himself sailed farther up the river with about 130 men in the galiot built in Santa Catalina and a brigantine. Gaboto explored the middle Paraná for about 20 *leguas* farther upstream, as far as Salto del Apipé, where he called the island at that point Isla de Santa Ana. His men were hungry and some began to mutiny and were brutally suppressed. The local Guaraní Indians supplied them with food and told Gaboto that one could not reach the gold and silver mines via the Paraná, but only

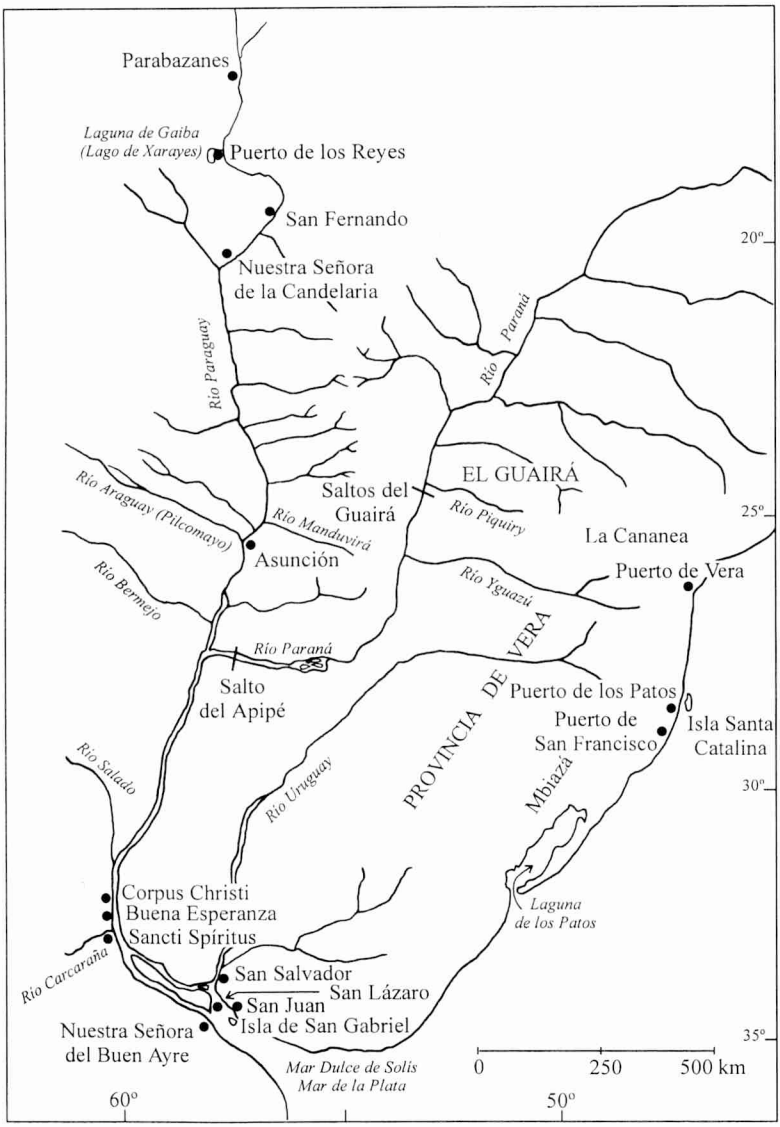

Fig. 4.2. The principal support points during the exploration and *conquista* of the la Plata region and Paraguay (after Machuca Martínez 1951:Maps 4 and 6; Montalto 1982:Map 1; Conquest 1891:Map; Peña Villamil 1982:75; Roulet 1993:104-5).

via the Río Paraguay. Gaboto therefore turned back and sailed up the Paraguay on 31 March 1528. This made him the first European to reach Paraguay by water, something that Alejo García had earlier managed to do over land. The river was explored as far as the mouth of the Ypytá or Bermejo. At Angostura - situated at latitude 25° 38' and therefore not far from the later Asunción - he engaged with a large number of Payaguáes, who were trying to prevent his passage in their canoes. A smaller expedition (of about 17 men) led by Miguel de Rifos, who was carrying out preliminary reconnaissances in a rowing boat, discovered the mouth of the Río Araguay (as the Pilcomayo was then called) and reached the mouth of the Río Manduvirá. They anchored there, made contact with a number of Carios, who first received the expedition members in a friendly manner and supplied them with food. But Rifos responded rudely to them, which led them to attack the expedition and kill a large number of men; the others returned to the point where Gaboto was awaiting them. After this reduction in the size of his force, Gaboto decided to return to Sancti Spíritus. He was short of provisions and, moreover, news reached him that ships of Diego García de Moguer were sailing up the river. He did indeed meet Diego García on the return journey. The latter was an experienced seaman, who had previously visited the la Plata estuary with Díaz de Solís and had then made the voyage round the world with Magellan and Elcano. Like Gaboto, García de Moguer had also received permission from the *Casa de Contratación* to undertake a voyage to the Moluccas. He had sailed from La Coruña on 15 January 1526 with this intention. When he arrived at the la Plata estuary, he had met some of Gaboto's people and had decided to sail up the Río Paraná in a brigantine with 60 men to look for Gaboto.

The expedition leaders debated each other's rights to explore, but because this did not lead to a consensus of opinion and, because the dangers were great, as was the need for men, they decided to combine their forces, return to Sancti Spíritus and prepare a new expedition there. Dissatisfied with the agreement, García disappeared to the south, but Gaboto had him followed with one of his ships in order to bring him back. After this forced reunion, they decided to build brigantines for a new attempt to find the empire of the *Rey Blanco*; two-thirds of the booty acquired there would go to Gaboto

and his men and one third to García and his men. In August 1528 Gaboto and García, with seven brigantines, undertook the voyage to the north. They sailed about 20 *leguas* up the Río Paraguay and were received in a friendly manner by Carios, but when Gaboto and his men tried to settle certain matters with force, the natives again quickly rose in opposition. The journey did not continue further, because Gaboto got wind that the Timbúes had planned an attack on Sancti Spíritus. He therefore decided to turn back. The captains sailed downstream to the *fuerte* and proceeded from there to San Salvador. Because of this decision, the expedition penetrated less far up the Río Paraguay than the previous reconnaissance.

The Spanish and the Indians around Sancti Spíritus had maintained good relations with each other for a long time but, thanks to the bad policies of Gregorio Caro (the local commandant), the situation had changed. The Indians had therefore attacked the fort shortly after Gaboto's departure. The majority of the garrison had sought safety in the brigantines; one ship succeeded in escaping, the other did not, so that the men who had taken refuge in it were killed. The *fuerte* itself was destroyed, the houses were set on fire and the Indians seized everything that was to their taste. The survivors, who were hungry and in rags, managed to reach San Salvador in their brigantine and told Gaboto of the disaster.

The situation was very delicate from that time. The expedition had lost a great part of its men and equipment, there was a shortage of food and the Indians had successfully shown their superiority. In other words, it was no longer possible to reach the 'Sierra de la Plata' under these circumstances. Diego García de Moguer left unannounced for Spain, Gaboto was eventually forced to do the same and arrived in Seville in July 1530 with only 20 survivors and no more than a very small quantity of silver. Gaboto had to answer for his activities, received several sentences, had to pay compensation and was obviously dismissed from his post. García was also prosecuted. None of their activities had led to any conquests. The only thing to which they could lay claim was that they had been the first to explore in part the Río Paraná and Río Paraguay with European ships on behalf of Spain. But they had not succeeded in finding a navigable waterway to the 'Sierra de la Plata', nor had

they discovered a good overland route or established any permanent settlements.

During his explorations, however, Gaboto had obtained information from Querandíes, Timbúes and other Indian groups whom he encountered, which wholly or partly confirmed the stories he had heard in Pernambuco, Santa Catalina and San Lázaro. He even met Indians who had formed part of Alejo García's expedition. Besides food, the Cario Indians of Ñemby gave him some silver which they had themselves obtained from the Andes region, either through direct contacts or thanks to Alejo García's expedition. All this had convinced Gaboto that it must be possible to find the 'Sierra de la Plata' via the rivers he had explored. The little silver that Gaboto had obtained from the Indians was, moreover, sufficient reason to assume the presence of great riches. It was therefore not surprising that the Mar Dulce de Solís was rechristened at that time the *Mar de la Plata*, a name which has partly survived up to the present day in the designation *Río de la Plata*.

In Spain, the stories of Gaboto and García also led people there to become more strongly convinced that precious metals existed in abundance in America. Fantastic tales began to circulate about the riches of the *Rey Blanco* and the 'Sierra de la Plata'. The name 'Paraguay' was first used in those days to designate the territory discovered up to that date. Paraguay became known as the region from which one could reach the 'promised land' and where, moreover, Indian farmers produced sufficient food to facilitate that goal. From that time, almost the sole purpose of the further explorations along the Río Paraná and the Río Paraguay was to discover the route to the region of precious metals. The 'Sierra de la Plata' must and would be found.

People in Portugal also became interested. At the same time that Spain was sending ships to the Río de la Plata, Portugal was doing the same. In 1526-27 Cristóbal Jaques sailed to the Río de la Plata and up the Paraná. In 1530, Martín Alfonso de Souza sailed from Lisbon with five ships. After he arrived in the la Plata region, he made various attempts to explore the route further. In 1531 a column of 80 man led by Francisco de Chaves (former castaway from the Solís expedition) set out from the Atlantic coast to try to find a route over land, but the men were murdered near the Río

Paraná, opposite the mouth of the Río Yguazú. De Souza himself made a failed attempt to find a route by water and subsequently further ordered Pedro López to explore the estuary of the Paraná and the Uruguay. When the Portuguese Crown was informed of the course of events, the king ordered Martín Alfonso de Souza to prepare a new *armada*. The Spanish king learned of the Portuguese activities and lodged a diplomatic protest in Lisbon, pointing out that they were infiltrating into Spanish territory. The Portuguese, however, had a different interpretation of the precise line of the boundaries laid down in the Treaty of Tordesillas. Even before the la Plata region had been properly explored and conquered, it was already a contested zone.[9]

The activities of *adelantado* Pedro de Mendoza and his forces

The discoveries of Gaboto, but even more those of Pizarro, who returned from Peru with a large quantity of gold and silver, and the activities which the Portuguese were threatening to undertake, were more than sufficient reason for Spain to equip a new expedition. From that time, the Spanish Crown made use of an old institution, the *adelantazgo*, for the further exploration, conquest and colonisation of the la Plata region

An *adelantado* was a person appointed by the king, who was granted permission to explore and colonise new territories for the mother country, making use of his own fortune. An *adelantado* was granted wide powers, not only as the leader of a military expedition, but also as the future administrator of the newly discovered territories. He had the power, for example, to distribute building lots (*solares*) and agricultural land (*chacras*) and to give out Indians in *encomienda*, i.e. to allocate them as labourers or tribute payers to Spaniards.

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[9] For the reconnaissances of Gaboto and the Portuguese, see: Benítez 1985:23-6; Cardozo 1967:127-8; Cardozo 1989:41-6; Chaves n.d.:41-5; Domínguez 1996:111-3; Koebel 1919:41-5; Machuca Martínez 1951:6-7; Ministerio 1987:13; Pastore 1972:5; Schmidel 1962:IX (Foreword by Plischke); Stunnenberg 1993:15; Traversoni & Kampf 1976:15-6.

Pedro de Mendoza, a prominent and very wealthy man, but one already plagued by sickness, was the first *adelantado* appointed to carry out the further exploration, conquest and colonisation of southern South America. Like every *adelantado*, he had to finance the expedition himself, but received many honours and privileges in exchange, both for himself and his heirs. The *capitulaciones* (agreements) signed on 21 May 1534 for the conquest and populating of the la Plata region bestowed on him the titles of *adelantado*, governor, captain-general and count of the Río de la Plata with 10,000 vassals, for the duration of two lives. The latter meant that he could appoint his own successor.[10] He was also appointed *alcalde perpetuo* (mayor for life) and *alguacil mayor* (chief of police) of the place where he established himself to perform his administrative functions. One of Mendoza's tasks was to consolidate Spanish sovereignty over the Río de la Plata region, which had been discovered and fragmentarily explored by Juan Díaz de Solís, Alejo García and Sebastián Gaboto not very long before. In addition, he obviously had to try to find the fabulous riches of the 'Sierra de la Plata', which had been spoken about since the latter expeditions. The king would have the right to one fifth of all the gold and silver discovered by Mendoza and his men, with the remainder being shared among the *conquistadores*.[11] Other tasks included the import of horses into the la Plata region and the establishment of three stone forts (*fortalezas de piedra;* not towns!), at places which seemed the most suitable to him. He had to take with him arms and everything else needed for the *conquista* and, as well as taking the necessary men, had to be accompanied by a number of Franciscans. An important underlying motive to the commission to carry out exploration and colonisation was that it was hoped that Mendoza would be able to ensure that the Portuguese would not extend their

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[10] The publication *El Archivo Nacional* of the Ministerio de Educación y Culto (1988) contains on pp. 5-15 the text of three documents: a) *Capitulación concedida a Don Pedro de Mendoza para la conquista y población del Río de la Plata* b) *Real Cédula por la que se confirma a don Pedro de Mendoza el título de Adelantado* and c) *Real Cédula por la que se confirma a Don Pedro de Mendoza el título de gobernador y capitán general del Río de la Plata.*

[11] Cardozo 1967:192-3.

influence beyond the Tordesillas line and invade the land of the *Rey Blanco* before Spain had taken possession of it. The area over which Pedro de Mendoza was licensed to exercise authority is shown on Map 3.1.

The expedition possessed sufficient funds and, moreover, so many enthusiastic people applied to join it that it was soon able to set out. The eleven ships, with which Pedro de Mendoza set out from the port of Sanlúcar de Barrameda on 24 August 1535, the one ship that left somewhat later and the three ships which joined the fleet in the Canary Islands, carried a total of some 2,000 men and a few women to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.[12] It was the largest and best equipped expedition to the New World that had so far been organised. Even persons from the top rungs of the aristocracy and numerous illustrious captains accompanied Mendoza, seeking their fortunes.[13] Catalans and Andalusians were in the majority, but the company also included 72 foreigners (mainly Portuguese, but also Flemings, Frenchmen, Germans, English and Italians).[14]

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[12] There is some uncertainty about the precise date of departure, the number of ships and the number of expedition members. The date and numbers given here are derived from Domínguez (1996:147-53), who did detailed research into this.

[13] See Lafuente Machaín (1937) for an alphabetical list of the many hundreds of *conquistadores* (including biographical details) who took part in the expedition of *adelantado* Mendoza, joined Pancaldo's ship, the *armada* of *veedor* Cabrera, the expedition of *adelantado* Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, that of *adelantado* Sanabria, the ships of Orué and the expedition of *adelantado* Ortiz de Zárate.

[14] One of the Germans was the merchant Ulrich Schmidt (1510-79) from Straubing - called Ulrico Schmid(e)l by the Spaniards. He stayed in the La Plata region for many years and took part, *inter alia*, in the expedition which penetrated into the Andes in 1548, searching for booty, precious metals and other riches. Schmidel did not return to Europe until 1552, on which occasion he travelled from Asunción to the Atlantic coast with twenty Carios, who acted as porters. In Europe he recorded his adventures in a travel narrative which he completed in 1555, with the title *Wahrhaftige Historien einer wunderbaren Schiffahrt*. The account appeared in print for the first time in 1567 (in German) and was also translated into Latin and the principal European languages, including Spanish and English. There was even a Dutch edition (1706). The work ran to no fewer to 52 editions. His publication forms an important

The *adelantado*'s *armada* arrived in the bay of Rio de Janeiro on 30 November 1535. Mendoza subsequently disembarked farther to the south in the area known as la Cananea, which formed the most northerly spot on the southern Atlantic coast to which Spain could lay claim under the Treaty of Tordesillas (Fig. 4.2). In December 1535, the fleet arrived in the la Plata estuary and moored off the Isla de San Gabriel.

While awaiting the arrival of a further ship belonging to the expedition, Mendoza established on the opposite coast, near 'el Riachuelo', on 3 February 1536, the first settlement on Argentine territory. This came to consist of a few straw and mud huts and was surrounded by a rampart of earth. The name given to the settlement was Nuestra Señora (de Santa María) del Buen Ayre. This name had nothing to do with the brilliant local skies, but was in fact the Spanish equivalent of 'Nostra Signora di Bonaria', the name of the much-invoked protectress of the Mediterranean mariners, whose image was to be found in the sanctuary at Cagliari (Sardinia). The new settlement was largely dependent for its food supply on the Querandíes, the nomadic Indians inhabiting the coastal zone between the rivers Carcaraña and Salado in the north and the bay of Samborombón in the south.[15] The Indians turned hostile, attacked the settlement several times and proved not to be prepared - and were probably also unable as hunters and gatherers - to supply the needs of the numerous Spaniards. The expedition members themselves were soldiers and certainly not farmers and were consequently unable to initiate any immediate agricultural activity themselves. Moreover, they had other priorities: the discovery of the 'Sierra de la Plata'. As a result, the survival of Nuestra Señora del Buen Ayre was placed in doubt.

Amarilla Fretes (1942) and Lafuente Machaín (1936a) pointed out that Pedro de Mendoza and his men did not intend to found a real town on

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chronicle of the *conquista*, despite the many different hands, chronological inaccuracies, omissions, insertions etc. (Cardozo 1967:492-3; Nickson 1993: 535). For Schmidt's journey, see besides Schmidel 1962, Conquest 1891:1-95 and Schmidel 1986.

[15] Fein 1964:393.

the la Plata. None of them spoke, in referring to the settlement, of a *ciudad*, but of a *puerto*, *fuerte*, or *real*. A *puerto* was in those days no more than a place along a coast or river bank that was more or less protected against storms and wind and, therefore, relatively safe, so that ships' crews could drop anchor and go on land. A *fuerte* or *real* was no more than a simple fortified encampment. The fortification generally took the form of a palisade, a ditch and a rampart formed from the soil taken from the ditch. Within the encampment were a few huts constructed of wood, mud, thatch and straw, in which the men lived and guarded their supplies. Sometimes a small church was erected and there was also a smithy for certain essential artisan activities. Nor did the settlement of Buen Ayre exceed this humble scale. It was only as large as a later *manzana* (residential block). Mendoza had only one end in view: to reach the 'Sierra de la Plata'; In other words, Buen Ayre was intended only to provide a breathing space until the ship San Cristóbal, that had been delayed and carried, besides soldiers, vital cargo (including provisions, wine, horses and artillery) arrived. From the *fuerte* Mendoza could patch up his fleet somewhat and try to obtain provisions. Moreover, Buen Ayre provided him with a fortified support point and a base of operations to reach his actual goal. Looked at another way, Buen Ayre was a settlement which was comparable as a stopping and landing place with Rio de Janeiro, where Mendoza's *armada* stayed for a short time, and San Gabriel where the expedition stayed for nearly two months. Buen Ayre had the same function and was on the same scale as a fortified support point as Gaboto's Sancti Spíritus and the future Corpus Christi (Buena Esperanza) and Asunción (until 1541). Buen Ayre was certainly not a town (*ciudad*) and not even a village (*aldea*). Mendoza assumed that, in the course of time, Buen Ayre might be given up again as soon as the actual goal - the 'Sierra de la Plata' - had been reached and the support point on the transit route was no longer needed. No one was yet thinking, therefore, about colonisation and the establishment of permanent settlements on the la Plata estuary. There was no question at this stage of laying out a town plan or of allocating *solares* and *chacras*. The expedition settled in Buen Ayre without any ceremony; official town foundations, on the other hand, were accompanied by due ceremonial display. The documents of the time accordingly do not refer to *vecinos*. Nor was a *cabildo* (town council) composed or a *jurisdicción* (jurisdiction) deli-

mited, matters which, at that time, were indissolubly linked with the foundation of *ciudades*.[16]

Two great reconnaissance expeditions were sent out from the *fuerte* Nuestra Señora del Buen Ayre, partly with the aim of obtaining food. These expeditions met with resistance and aggression from the Indians.

One of the expeditions was led by Gonzalo de Mendoza and set off towards the Isla de Santa Catalina. On their return voyage, the ships also brought with them, besides food, a number of Spaniards (including Hernando de Ribera, a castaway from the Solís expedition), who lived on the coast opposite the island and had married native women. They spoke Guaraní and might therefore be very useful as interpreters. They declared emphatically that the riches Mendoza was seeking were to be found in Paraguay.

The other expedition sailed up the Río Paraná in May 1536 and was led by Captain Juan de Ayolas, Mendoza's first assistant, and Domingo Martínez de Irala.[17] At the mouth of the Carcaraña, near the spot where Gaboto had founded the - since destroyed - fort of Sancti Spíritus, Juan de Ayolas established the fortified encampment of Corpus Christi on 15 June 1536, in the territory of the Timbúes. He then returned to Buen Ayre, taking with him both provisions and a number of friendly Indians. Shortly afterwards, Mendoza himself sailed from Buen Ayre to Corpus Christi and, on that occasion, in the second half of September 1536, he ordered the *fuerte* to be moved four to five *leguas* downstream. At its new site, the fort was given the name Nuestra Señora de la Buena Esperanza.

Now that the food problem had been temporarily solved, the time was ripe for further explorations. On 14 October 1536, Cap-

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[16] Amarilla Fretes 1942:51-3; Lafuente Machaín 1936a. For the location, area and topographical features of Mendoza's Buen Ayre, see the publication by Molina (1957). Sánchez Quell (1957:51-2) refers both to the town (*ciudad*) Buen Ayre and the town (*ciudad*) Asunción, which is not correct.

[17] For more details of the character of Martínez de Irala and his activities in Paraguay see, *inter alia*, the account by Cecilio Báez (in Báez y Yubero, 1915:107-13), the publication of Sanz y Díaz (1963) and Zubizarreta 1957:193-394.

tain Juan de Ayolas and his second-in-command, Domingo Martínez de Irala, therefore set out northwards from Nuestra Señora de la Buena Esperanza in two brigantines and a caravel with 160 men, in order to retrace the route of Sebastián Gaboto and to continue the explorations farther upstream, as far as was at all possible. 140 men remained behind in Buena Esperanza. Ayolas was given the commission by *adelantado* Mendoza not only to carry out further explorations, but also to establish a *fortaleza* in Paraguay. The

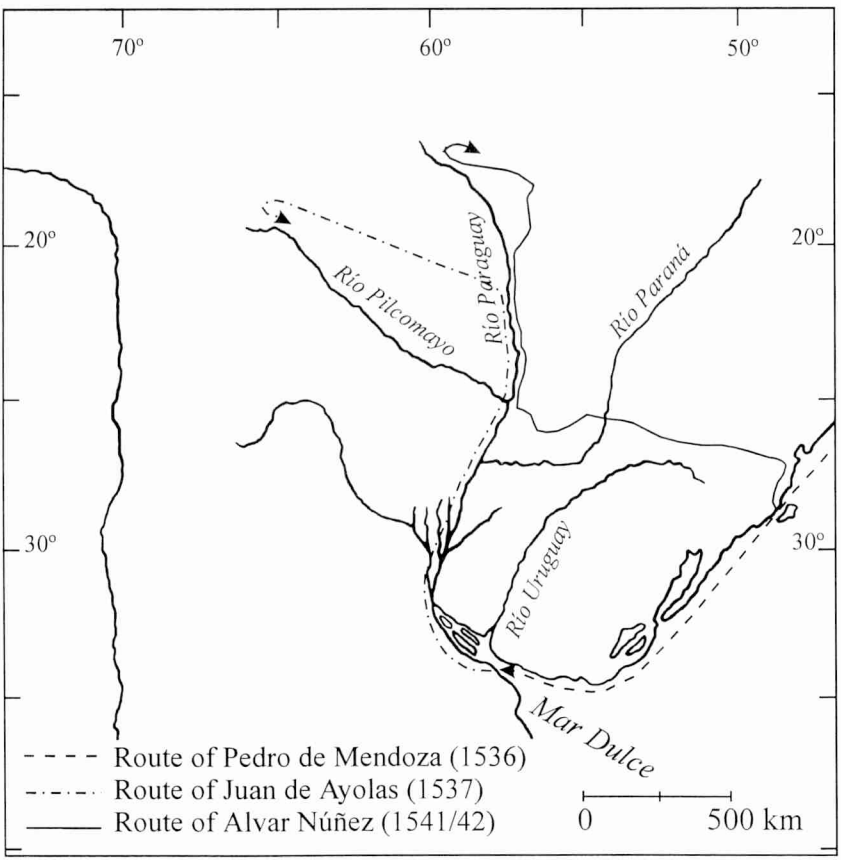

Fig. 4.3. The approximate routes of the expeditions made by Pedro de Mendoza, Juan de Ayolas and Alvar Ñunez Cabeza de Vaca in the early sixteenth century (after Machuca Martínez 1951:Map 6).

caravel was lost before it had reached the mouth of the Río Paraguay, and so part of the expedition had to try to find a route overland. They had to contend on the journey not only with hunger, cold, heat, gales and downpours, but also with calms (so that they had to row). When they started to ascend the Río Paraguay, however, the men were fortunate to encounter Indians who were willing to supply them with food and also provided canoes to enable the castaways to continue their journey.

Like Gaboto, the expedition members encountered resistance from Payaguá Indians near the Paso de Angostura, but they managed to beat them off. Between Cerro Lambaré (south of the later Asunción) and the bay of Asunción, they made contact with the Guaraníes. They broke the initial resistance by defeating the Indians, who were under the command of *cacique* Lambaré. From that time the Guaraníes accepted the Spaniards as allies, were friendly towards them and generously supplied them with food and women. Ulrico Schmidel, a German, who was a member of the expedition, lyrically described the wealth of food crops, meat, fish, honey (from which they made 'wine') and cotton, but allowance should probably be made for the fact that he had previously suffered his full share of privations. The Spaniards remained for some time on the site of the later Asunción before continuing the reconnaissances. Ayolas and his men promised to build the Carios a *casa* (fortification) on their return.

Sailing and rowing northwards, the explorers arrived on 2 February 1537 at a small natural *puerto* on the right bank of the Río Paraguay, where Juan de Ayolas had a small fort, called Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria, built on the very same day. He also met there an Indian who had accompanied Alejo García and declared that he could and would take Ayolas to the places reached by his former chief. The Payaguáes received the Spaniards hospitably, supplied them with food and gave them information about the journey undertaken by Alejo García. In order to perpetuate the good relations with the local population, Ayolas married the daughter of one of the Payaguá *caciques*. The foundation of Candelaria was the first foundation on Paraguayan territory. The settlement was situated near Cerro Pan de Azúcar, a little to the north of the

modern Bahia Negra, and was also known as Puerto de Ayolas (Fig. 4.2).[18]

From Candelaria, Ayolas organised an overland expedition to the 'Sierra de la Plata' with about 130 men and 390 Indians. They set out on 12 February 1537, while Captain Martínez de Irala was left behind in Candelaria as deputy with 30 men and the two remaining ships, with strict instructions to await the return of the expedition. Martínez de Irala received various other instructions and had, if possible, to build a *fortaleza* on the site with the help of the Indians.

Ayolas more or less followed the route that Alejo García had taken. After a journey through the Chaco, that was accompanied by many privations, he approached the outliers of the Andes on about 2 May, with 127 white soldiers. He succeeded in penetrating into the land of the Caracaráes, causing panic among the population there, just as Alejo García had done, and seizing by plunder twenty loads of silver, gold and other valuables. The population of Charcas was obviously also hostile towards Ayolas and his men, so that the latter decided quite soon to return to their base in la Candelaria. Tired, exhausted and without ammunition, Ayolas finally succeeded in reaching the Río Paraguay with only 80-90 men in March 1538. They found that the ships and men which they had left behind there had disappeared. The Payaguáes behaved in a friendly manner towards them at first, but soon enticed the expedition members to a site which they said was more suitable for an encampment, and killed them, after which they seized the plundered valuables. Only one of the Chaneses, who had travelled with Ayolas as bearers from Charcas, survived the slaughter. Thus Ayolas and his men suffered the same fate as Alejo García.

The people left behind at the mouth of la Plata did not sit still during Ayolas' expedition. Since nothing had been heard from Juan de Ayolas after several months in Nuestra Señora del Buen Ayre and they knew that he had embarked on a dangerous and difficult

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[18] The puerto was used several times in the earlier colonial period as a base of operations for Chaco expeditions, as was Puerto de las Piedras, which was situated near present-day Concepción (Nickson 1993:487).

expedition to the north, *adelantado* Pedro de Mendoza had sent three ships - built in Buen Ayre - supplied with food and other necessities, up the Paraná and the Paraguay on 15 January 1537. The expedition had to offer assistance, if necessary. It consisted of about 60 men, including a couple of English and Portuguese, and was commanded by Captain Juan de Salazar y Espinosa de los Monteros and his right-hand man, Gonzalo de Mendoza. One ship remained behind in Buena Esperanza, where there was a need for a better connection with Buen Ayre; the other two ships sailed on and endured a difficult voyage upstream, defying hunger and other privations. When the wind dropped, the vessels had to be rowed. These Europeans also landed in the small bay of Asunción at the end of April, where the Indians received them hospitably. The Guaraníes again showed themselves as allies and supplied the expedition with food. Salazar promised them that he would build a fort there on his return, partly out of gratitude for their support.

On 23 June 1537 Juan de Salazar and Gonzalo de Mendoza arrived at the place where Martínez de Irala had been carrying out reconnaissances. That was not in Candelaria, where he had been ordered to wait, but about thirty *leguas* north of there. Lack of food and hostile Indians had sometimes forced him to sail up and downstream. Salazar and Mendoza learned what activities Ayolas had undertaken and also that he had still not returned. A few small reconnaissances in the Chaco proved fruitless; nevertheless, they decided to take no further action and returned to Candelaria. Martínez de Irala sailed somewhat farther to the south, to a small Guaraní port - perhaps near the later *castillo* of Arecutacuá - in order to have the necessary repairs carried out to his two brigatines. Then he returned with his men to Candelaria. Juan de Salazar decided not to await Ayolas' return (nor was he obliged to do so), but sailed back in July/August to the *frontera* - the area around the bay of the later Asunción - with 57 companions to build the fort he had promised there.

It was a sensible decision, because - as it would turn out - not a single member of Ayolas' expedition would return. Martínez de Irala did wait, but had to contend with all kinds of difficulties, such as the hostility of the Indians, lack of food and excessive heat, which the wooden ships were not built to withstand. The vessels

were in a poor condition and his men also needed a more normal life. He therefore also sailed after some time towards Asunción. That was a few months before Ayolas and his men would eventually arrive again at the Paraguay river.

After having erected the promised *fuerte,* Juan de Salazar left Gonzalo de Mendoza behind in Asunción with 30 men and himself travelled south with the other expedition members, to report to the *adelantado*. Juan de Salazar did not know, however, that Pedro de Mendoza, who was already suffering from *mal gálico* (syphilis) before his departure from Spain, had already left for Spain on 22

Table 4.1. List of support points (excl. towns) established during the first reconnaissances in the la Plata basin, 1516-58.

Support point	Date established	Built by
Los Patos	1516	García c.s.
San Lázaro	April 1527	Gaboto
Sancti Spíritus	11-5-1527	Gaboto
San Salvador	June 1527	Grajeda
Nuestra Señora del Buen Ayre	3-2-1536	Mendoza
Corpus Christi (Buena Esperanza)	15-6-1536	Ayolas
Candelaria	2-2-1537	Ayolas
Puerto de Vera	1541	Núñez Cabeza de Vaca
San Juan	May/June 1542	Romero
Puerto de los Reyes	6-1-1543	Martínez de Irala
San Fernando	January 1548	Martínez de Irala
Puerto de San Francisco	1552/53	Trejo
Parabazanes (=Santiago de los Reyes)	July 1558	Chaves

April 1537. Before his departure he had transferred all his powers to Juan de Ayolas, who would never have any knowledge of the fact. Nor did Juan de Salazar yet know that Pedro de Mendoza had already died during the return voyage. That was on 23 June 1537,

on the same day that Salazar and Martínez de Irala had met each other near Candelaria.[19]

The foundation and early growth of Asunción

Juan de Salazar started the construction of the promised *casa fuerte* on 15 August 1537. In view of the date, the fort was given the name *Nuestra Señora de Santa María de la Asunción* and, according to him, had to serve as *amparo y reparo de la conquista* (protection and support for the conquest). Salazar had received no specific instructions from *adelantado* Pedro de Mendoza to build a *fuerte* in Paraguay, because Mendoza had ordered Ayolas to build one. But it is almost certain that Domingo Martínez de Irala, who undoubtedly knew of the instructions to Juan de Ayolas, and Juan de Salazar had spoken about it together. Thus Salazar carried out *de facto* what Ayolas had been instructed to do, and he never claimed anything else. The *fuerte* of Asunción was the third fortified support point after Nuestra Señora del Buen Ayre and Corpus Christi (Buena Esperanza), which meant that, with its construction, the instructions contained in Mendoza's *capitulaciones* had been fully complied with, except that the latter specified *stone* forts (*fortalezas de piedra*).[20]

Juan de Salazar regarded the *casa fuerte* at Asunción as an ideal support point, because, in his view, it could not be situated far from the 'Sierra de la Plata'. But other considerations also played a

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[19] For the expeditions of Mendoza, Ayolas and others, discussed above, see: Benítez 1985:29-33; Cardozo 1967:31,56-8,154-6; Cardozo 1989:46-54; Cardozo 1994:23; Chaves n.d.:49-53; Domínguez 1996:12,21,34,51,119-22; Koebel 1919:45-6,59; Machuca Martínez 1951:9-11; Ministerio 1987:14-5; Nickson 1993:376-7; Pastore 1972:4-5,10; Peña Villamil 1982:63-7; Quevedo 1987:108-10; Sánchez Quell 1983:37-8.

[20] Cardozo 1941a; Cardozo 1994:24; Lafuente Machaín 1931:1-22; Lafuente Machaín 1936b; Ministerio 1988:6. Manuel Domínguez paid detailed attention to the foundation of Asunción in his study of the Sierra de la Plata (1996:45-80) in order to make clear that only Salazar was involved in this foundation and that Martínez de Irala was not present (and could not have been).

role in the foundation and siting of Asunción. An essential factor was that the Guaraníes (Carios), after some initial resistance, began to show considerably more cooperation than the population elsewhere along the river. The Guaraní girls had no objection to entering into relations with the Spaniards, while the Guaraníes were also willing to supply the Spaniards with food, building timber and many other necessities. They also provided all kinds of personal assistance, were ready to accompany the Europeans on their expeditions and made their knowledge of the region available to them. They regarded the Spaniards as their friends and equals. Moreover, the site proved to offer good development potential. There was a river inlet which provided shelter to shipping; the somewhat higher elevation of the site made it more or less possible to keep a watch on the river valley and the Chaco (with its hostile tribes); the situation of the site lent itself to the construction of fortifications; the climate appeared to be good; there seemed to be relatively little risk of diseases; the environs were rich in forest products; there were *campos*; the surrounding land was flood-free and fertile and appeared to be suitable not only for the cultivation of native crops such as maize and manioc, but also for the introduction of European plants.[21]

Despite these advantages it was nevertheless strange that the Spaniards established themselves in the interior of South America; far from the sea, in a warm forest region and close to a hostile Chaco population. It was only their desire to have a good base of operations for approaching the 'Sierra de la Plata', that made their action understandable.

The *casa fuerte* was built on the somewhat higher part of the chosen site and consisted of a square wooden house with two defensive towers. Dwellings were built around the *casa*. They were no more than small structures of wood, reeds and mud, roofed with straw and palm leaves. Until 1539, the only people who lived in Asunción were those who had remained behind with Gonzalo de Mendoza after the foundation. In June 1539 their numbers were reinforced by the arrival in Asunción of Ruiz Galán and Alonso

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[21] Benítez 1985:32-3; Koebel 1919:50-1; Velázquez 1981:31.

Cabrera with a large part of the population of Buena Esperanza and Buen Ayre. The inhabitants of the former place had been forced to flee after a fierce attack by the Timbúes on 3 February 1539.[22] The number of huts (*chozas*) in Asunción increased. The *pobladores* settled on both sides of the local brook, to which they gave the name *arroyo* Jaén.

The non-return of Ayolas and his men led Martínez de Irala to regard himself as Ayolas' legal successor, since Mendoza had transferred his powers to Ayolas who, in his turn, had left behind Martínez de Irala, his 'right-hand man', in Candelaria with powers and instructions. Irala's rights were contested, however, by Ruiz de Galán. The tensions occasioned by this came to an end when *veedor* Alonso de Cabrera arrived in Buen Ayre in November 1538. He brought not only the report that Pedro de Mendoza had died at sea, but also carried with him a *Real Provisión* of 12 September 1537, containing instructions about the procedure to be followed if Mendoza's successor, Juan de Ayolas, was no longer alive. This *Provisión* stated that, in this case, the king agreed that the *conquistadores* themselves should appoint the most suitable person from among their number.[23]

With this document in his hand *veedor* Cabrera selected Martínez de Irala and the struggle for competency between the latter and Ruiz de Galán was settled for the time being. Cabrera appointed Martínez de Irala as the governor's official deputy on 31 July 1539, and also appointed him deputy captain-general of the Río de la Plata. He did, however, oblige Martínez de Irala to return to Candelaria and to make one further search for Ayolas, from whom nothing had been heard since 12 February 1537. The deputy governor carried out this commission in November 1539. He left 50 people behind in Asunción under the command of Gonzalo de Mendoza and sailed north in nine brigantines carrying 280 Spaniards and a large number of Indians. His expedition arrived in

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[22] Zubizarreta 1964:27-8.

[23] Although the order thus related only to the situation at that moment, the privilege was also used at a later time to appoint a governor if the post suddenly fell vacant; it was even used to depose governors if necessary.

Candelaria on 16 January 1540. About eight *leguas* south of Candelaria they met a number of Payaguáes in Puerto de San Sebastián, who told them that Ayolas was still alive and was in the interior. Martínez de Irala therefore left 70 people behind in San Sebastián under the command of Juan Ortega and he himself set out from Candelaria on 14 February 1540 with 210 man on a search expedition in the Chaco. Because of rising floods and food shortages the expedition had to turn back to San Sebastián after only 20 days. Just before they arrived there, Martínez de Irala learned from the Indian who had accompanied Ayolas and was the only survivor of the massacre, that Ayolas had long since died. He had eventually returned with the surviving members of the expedition, but had found Candelaria deserted and, after suffering many privations, had been murdered, together with his men, by the Payaguáes. Once this had been established in March 1540, Martínez de Irala was elected and recognised by all the *conquistadores* - in conformity with the *Real Provisión* - as governor and captain-general of the la Plata area. Asunción became his residence. Having left Spain as one of the many *conquistadores*, Martínez de Irala had rather unexpectedly reached the administrative peak in a few years.[24]

The evacuation of Nuestra Señora del Buen Ayre

Asunción was further expanded when Nuestra Señora del Buen Ayre was abandoned as a support point. After its foundation in 1536, the Europeans on the la Plata estuary had led a precarious existence in the first few years. They had little to complain about the natural harbour itself but, from their arrival, the *conquistadores* had to contend with food shortages, to such an extent that they first had to organise food-gathering expeditions, before they could even think of actual reconnaissances. There had been moments when they had been forced to eat their companions who had been killed or condemned to death. They were incapable of engaging immediately

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[24] Cardozo 1967:70-1; Cardozo 1989:54-8; Domínguez 1996:122; Kanter 1936:333.

in any farming. The people who had accompanied Mendoza were not farmers (*labradores*), but *conquistadores* and they hoped, moreover, as we have said, that they would need to remain only temporarily on the site. The climate was often raw and dry. The Querandíes living in the vicinity behaved in such a hostile manner that casualties fell from time to time and the Spaniards had permanently to be on their guard against them; they sometimes had to withdraw for safety to the few remaining ships. In the course of time the Indians withdrew more into the interior, which did make life less risky for the Spanish, but it also meant that they could no longer rely on them for food supplies. The young settlement was also ravaged by fire and disease.

The situation had grown a little more favourable, however, and the Spaniards also had some good fortune. When all the necessities that Mendoza had brought with him were nearly or wholly exhausted, *veedor* Cabrera arrived in November 1538 with two ships. But the inhabitants of Buen Ayre also had good fortune, because in April of that same year, the merchant León Pancaldo, who was *en route* to Peru in the 'Santa María', had sought refuge in Buen Ayre because of bad weather in the Strait of Magellan, and had suffered shipwreck there. He carried all kinds of cargo, including provisions, which reduced the food shortage. They also had uses for the luxury articles which he brought with him, including cutting a dash in Paraguay.[25] Moreover, after a few years, the inhabitants of Buen Ayre had managed to develop a little arable farming and small livestock keeping and to practise some hunting and fishing, which enabled them to maintain themselves somewhat better at the site. Moreover, they were no longer greatly troubled by the Indians.

Martínez de Irala, as governor, nevertheless considered it better that the fewer than 400 *conquistadores* who had ultimately survived from Mendoza's 2,000-strong expeditionary force should not continue to live dispersed in Buen Ayre, Buena Esperanza and Asunción, but should be concentrated in the latter settlement. Such a concentration would facilitate the discovery and ultimate conquest of the 'Sierra de la Plata', especially since numerous helpful and

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[25] González 1948:171; Warren 1949:130.

friendly Indians lived in the vicinity of Asunción and none around Buen Ayre. The idea of concentration was incidentally not new. Before his return to Spain, Pedro de Mendoza had already spoken in favour of concentration of all the *conquistadores* in one place, namely, at the place which Juan de Ayolas would consider the most suitable.

When he had consolidated his position as governor, Martínez de Irala travelled personally to Buen Ayre in January 1541 to initiate the removal from the two *puertos*. He was quickly able to persuade the few remaining inhabitants of Buena Esperanza of the advantages of concentration. They moved to Buen Ayre in expectation of the move to Asunción. But Martínez de Irala's proposal met with opposition among the roughly 70 inhabitants of Buen Ayre. They were not inclined to move, now that their living conditions had finally somewhat improved. However, *veedor* Cabrera, who had already spoken out previously in favour of concentration, emphatically charged Martínez de Irala on 10 April to push through the relocation and to do so completely, i.e. without leaving a contingent of Spaniards behind in Buen Ayre. Only complete concentration would permit the advance to the 'Sierra de la Plata' and sufficient support to be offered to the friendly Carios in their struggle against hostile Chaco Indians. On 16 April, therefore, Governor Irala ordered that the evacuation of Buen Ayre should be carried out on 10 May 1541; it was eventually carried out in June, because the Spaniards were expecting the earlier arrival of Núñez' *armada* (see below). The ship that had served as a *fortaleza* was set on fire, as were the little church and the homes. The inhabitants then departed to the north, taking with them as far as possible everything that was usable and transportable. They almost certainly also took with them the small number of livestock (a few horses and pigs).[26] The evacuation marked the abandonment of the only strategic support point on the sea, but one which had never had any political or economic

[26] This is at least the opinion of Assunção 1997:156. Another version (see, for example, Plischke in the Foreword to Schmidel, 1962 pp. XII) is that the horses which Mendoza took with him were left behind, ran wild in the Pampa and were later tamed by the Indians, who were then able to become horsemen.

significance, and the whole European population was concentrated in one place. For several decades, Asunción would remain the only settlement in the whole *cono sur* east of the Andes.[27]

A concrete consequence of the evacuation was that the ships which arrived in the Mar de la Plata after a long sea voyage had to cover the 260 *leguas* which still separated them from Asunción without first being able to revictual in a Spanish support point. This was a far from easy matter. Because of the many islands and sandbanks, the braided character of the river, the shifting main channel, the calms and strong winds, the voyage from the la Plata estuary to Asunción via the Paraná and the Paraguay was certainly no sinecure. The voyage generally took no less than five months.

Once the Spanish population had been concentrated in a single location, Governor Martínez de Irala promoted Asunción to *ciudad* (see Chapter 12) and the inhabitants would certainly go on trying until the end of the 1540s to reach the sources of precious metal production.

Balance sheet of the early years

Looking back on the events until the end of 1541, it may be concluded that not very much happened in the first few years after Mendoza's arrival, but at the same time, these years were certainly not unimportant. Although many of the members of Mendoza's expedition died and there were probably no more than about 600 survivors of his 'army' in 1538, an unprecedentedly large contingent of Europeans for that time had nevertheless arrived in the la Plata region. The *adelantado* had also brought in many materials, implements, seeds, pigs and horses. Moreover, strategically important reconnaissances had been carried out during various expeditions, peaceful relations had been built up with part of the indigenous population and this contact had even already led to the beginning of

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[27] For the evacuation of Buen Ayre see: Cardozo 1967:148-9; Cardozo 1989:58-60; Chaves n.d.:55. Lafuente Machaín 1931:4 *et seq.*; Ministerio 1987:16; Sánchez Quell 1983:31; Service 1954:20.

a growing racial mixing. In addition, after the Spaniards had made use of a number of temporary support points, Asunción was eventually founded in 1537. That foundation was an event that would have far-reaching consequences for the further course of the occupation of the la Plata region. From 1541, the European population was wholly concentrated there.

Developments during the second *adelantazgo*; end of the expeditions to the west

On 15 March 1540, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca was meanwhile appointed as the second *adelantado*.[28] His *armada* sailed from Cádiz on 2 December 1540. It consisted of three ships, which were to be joined by a fourth at the Canary Islands, and carried over 400 Spaniards and 46 horses. When they reached South America, the ships first sailed along the Brazilian coast as far as Puerto de Cananea, where the land was ceremonially taken into possession in the name of the king. The voyage was then continued and the expedition arrived on 29 March 1541 at Santa Catalina, where it disembarked, again formally took possession of the island and remained there for some time in order to recover from the privations of the voyage. The *adelantado* established Puerto de Vera on the mainland and placed a garrison there. A ship that was sent to Buen Ayre returned after some time with the news that the settlement at the la Plata mouth no longer existed. This caused the *adelantado* to allow only some of the *conquistadores* to sail on to Asunción and to continue the journey overland with the majority of them. He set out for Paraguay on 2 November 1541 with 200-250 Europeans, a large contingent of Indians from the coastal zone, two Franciscan priests and 26 horses (the first to reach Paraguay). Starting from the mouth of the Rio Itapocú (in what is now the Brazilian state of Santa Catarina), he first travelled in the direction of the transcontinental Indian route, before turning towards Asun-

[28] For a detailed account of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and his activities in Paraguay, see Zubizarreta 1957:7-193.

ción at the Río Piquirí (Fig. 4.3). During the difficult journey through completely unknown forests and over equally unknown mountain ridges, the indigenous population, who were afraid of the horses and the firearms, supplied the Spaniards with meat, honey and other food. Confrontations with the Indians and the use of force were avoided as far as possible, so that the journey proceeded peacefully. They were not spared privations (such as hunger), however. Núñez largely followed the route taken by Alejo García and passed, *inter alia*, through the valley of the Yguazú, where he discovered the Yguazú falls before crossing the Río Paraná and journeying up the valley of the Río Monday to Asunción. After a journey of about 350 *leguas* he arrived in Asunción on 11 March 1542. His arrival resulted in a considerable enlargement of the population of Asunción.[29]

Alvar Núñez initiated various activities as *adelantado*. In order to reduce the logistical problems for the seafarers and river navigators which had arisen through the evacuation of Buen Ayre, he sent Captain Juan Romero southwards to found a new settlement on the shore of la Plata. Romero founded San Juan in May or June 1542, at the mouth of the river which received the same name. The site lay close to the confluence of the Uruguay and the Paraná, on the territory of what is now Uruguay. Romero's foundation enjoyed little success, because the Charrúas adopted such an aggressive attitude that the settlement had to be abandoned again in October. Not until 1573, would further attempts be made to establish some support points along the river route.[30]

Shortly after his arrival, Núñez concluded peace with the Agaces (Payaguáes), against whom Martínez de Irala had taken severe action. He also officially declared war on the Guaycurúes at the request of a number of *caciques* from the neighbourhood of Asun-

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[29] Benítez 1985:39-41; Cardozo 1967:104-5;458-9; Chaves n.d.:57-8; Kohlhepp 1973-74:51; Ministerio 1987:18-9; Riera 1941:27. For Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's expedition and his experiences in Paraguay, see his *Comentarios*, which were published in: Conquest 1891:95 *et seq.*

[30] Kleinpenning 1995:14. Díaz de Guzmán states that the foundation of San Juan took place in 1552, but Enrique de Gandía has rightly pointed out in the reissue of his work that this is not correct.

ción, and he crossed the Río Paraguay in July 1542 with 200 Spaniards and considerably more friendly Indians in order to deal with these enemies of the Guaraníes in the Chaco. The Guaraní *caciques* hoped that the Spanish hackbuts and horses would guarantee the action's success. It was the first military action in which Guaraníes were deployed on a large scale. The expedition did indeed end successfully for the Spaniards and the Guaraníes, who had never before succeeded in defeating their archenemies. Núñez decided to undertake this action, because it was the only way in which he could obtain the support of the Guaraníes for an expedition to the 'Sierra de la Plata'. Unless the danger from the Guaycurúes was first averted by way of reciprocation, they would not be prepared to join him. A secondary effect of this successful military operation was that the other Chaco tribes gained more fear and respect for the Spaniards. Núñez also succeeded in entering into an alliance with the Naperúes (Aperús).

What was perhaps the most remarkable were Núñez' attempts to reach the land of the Caracaráes. He ordered Martínez de Irala at the end of 1542 to establish a *fuerte* farther to the north, to serve as base of operations for further exploration. In response to this order, Martínez de Irala built the military encampment of Puerto de los Reyes on 6 January 1543 on the lagoon of Gaiba (Xarayes lake) which he had discovered, on the right bank of the Alto Paraguay, in what is now Mato Grosso (about 200 *leguas* due north of Asunción, at 17° 51' S. latitude). On 8 September 1543, Núñez set out northwards from Asunción with 400 Spaniards (hackbut and crossbowmen) and 800-1,000 friendly Indians, in the hope of reaching the 'Sierra de la Plata'. His transport consisted of four brigantines, six barques, 20 rafts and one hundred canoes. Part of the expedition went overland. The expedition was so large that it has been referred to as the 'exodus to Peru'. Only 200 Spaniards remained behind in Asunción. The Spaniards who participated in it hoped to discover the Tapuá Guazú - a rocky hill, according to the Chaco Indians, from which one could see the fabulously rich land. From there they hoped at last to enter the land of their dreams. The Guaraníes also set out with high expectations. They hoped to re-enter the *tierra sin mal* and the territory of a number of their kinsmen, and to be able to take back with them slaves and women.

On 26 November 1543, Núñez entered the northern Chaco from Puerto de los Reyes, after first formally taking possession of the land, building a small church in the fort and leaving behind a garrison. Martínez de Irala acted as military leader of the expedition, but it lacked the services of a good guide. Moreover, tensions arose within the group because expedition members wished to use the Indians as bearers, which Núñez forbade. They also soon had to contend with lack of food, marsh fever and other diseases. The expedition found no important Indian settlements and heard that Tapuá Guazú was certainly 16 days' journey away, but hardly accessible because of the impenetrable vegetation. Núñez found himself forced to return to Puerto de los Reyes on as early as 18 January 1544. From that location he let Hernando de Ribera carry out reconnaissances farther to the north in the region of Xarayes. When Ribera returned with extremely interesting reports about Amazons and their wealth, he found that Alvar Núñez and most of the Spaniards were sick and that only eight healthy men were looking after the *real*. The *oficiales reales* (royal officials) accompanying the expedition wished to return, a request to which Núñez agreed under protest. In February 1544 the expedition was back in Asunción. In other words, the expedition was a fiasco.

The failure of the expedition cost Núñez Cabeza de Vaca much prestige and he also made himself unpopular as *adelantado* by wanting to put an end to a number of abuses by the Spaniards, such as polygamy and the manner in which the *vecinos* treated the Indians (especially the women). A conspiracy was framed against him by discontented Spaniards in April 1544 and he was taken prisoner. He was sent back to Spain in March 1545 in a ship that he himself had had built in Asunción. Back in Spain, he was sentenced for misconduct.[31]

The last great expedition that was organised from Asunción to the 'Sierra de la Plata' took place in 1547 and involved 250-300 Spaniards and about 2,000 friendly Indians. Seven brigantines and

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[31] Cardozo 1989:67-9,71-7; Chaves n.d.:58-60; Domínguez 1996:129-30; Flores Colombino 1995(=1967):973; Machuca Martínez 1951:11-2; Ministerio 1987:20-1; Nickson 1993:487; Susnik 1987:90.

200 canoes were deployed. Part of the expedition travelled overland and took 130 horses with it. 240 *conquistadores* were left behind in Asunción. The expedition was the initiative of Martínez de Irala and he was the leader. He had previously sent out Nufrio de Chávez in 1546 and 1547 to carry out some short reconnaissances, partly in order to discover if the 'Sierra de la Plata' could be reached via the Río Pilcomayo. The expedition began at the end of November 1547. It first travelled in the direction of the Puerto de los Mbayáes, which Martínez de Irala christened San Fernando. A fort was built and 40 Spaniards were left behind there. After the customary privations and fights with Chaco Indians, the expedition reached the area on the far side of the Río Guapay (Río Grande) from where they had a view of the high *sierras*, behind which were hidden the gold and silver mines in the empire of the *Rey Blanco*. The area of Cochabamba was claimed in the name of the Spanish Crown. There it became clear, however, to the expedition members (including the German Schmidel), through a meeting with Indians who already spoke Spanish, that Pizarro and his men had already conquered and occupied Charcas and other parts of the Inca empire. Within the framework of that conquest, La Plata (Chuquisaca) had already been founded in 1539 and the mineral wealth of Potosí had already been discovered in 1544. The viceroyalty of Peru was also created in that year, together with all its administrative apparatus.

After they had taken stock of the situation, the *oficiales reales* saw no point in further projects. They compelled Martínez de Irala to return to Asunción, where the expedition arrived back at the beginning of 1549. It had been sufficiently demonstrated by then that the Inca territory was quite accessible via the Panamá route and that there was really no longer a need for an access route from the la Plata region, not even by the authorities in Lima. The whole course of events illustrates the isolated situation of Paraguay. The people there simply did not know quickly enough what was happening elsewhere in South America. The expedition also illustrates that the hope of reaching the 'Sierra de la Plata' had still not disappeared in Asunción at the end of the 1540s.[32]

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[32] Benítez 1985:47-9; Cardozo 1989:83-5; Cardozo 1994:25; Service 1954:22-3.

After 1548 there were no further attempts to find the 'Sierra de la Plata' from the east. Carlos V informed Governor Martínez de Irala in a *Cédula* of 4 November 1552 that all exploration and conquest activities in the la Plata region were to be suspended. In July 1553 Martínez de Irala nevertheless organised a fresh expedition to explore the Chaco from San Fernando and to find *El Dorado* or *Paititi* of Indian legend. He believed that the mines might be situated not only in Alto Perú, but also farther to the north. This expedition proved to be a great fiasco, however, both financially and in regard to its objective. The expedition, which was undertaken with 130 Spanish horsemen and about 2,000 Guaraní auxiliaries, therefore came to be known - partly through the many privations - as the *mala entrada*.[33]

The third *adelantazgo*; the establishment of Puerto de San Francisco

On 22 July 1547, Juan de Sanabria was appointed third *adelantado*, governor and captain-general of the Río de la Plata by the Spanish king. His powers were comparable with those of his predecessors, but related to a smaller area than those of Mendoza and Núñez, because several new *gobernaciones* had meanwhile been created. As successor to Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Sanabria was given the task of further conquering, pacifying and colonising the region of la Plata and so providing support for the Spaniards already living there. He was granted the right to appoint his own successor. The new *adelantado* had to bring together about 500 people, including married men with their wives and children, and 100 young virgins (*doncellas*) who would wean the Spaniards in the 'Paradise of Mohammed' away from their sinful polygamous way of life. He had the task of establishing two settlements: one in la Cananea, opposite the island of Santa Catalina, and another in the estuary of the Río de la Plata, where Buen Ayre had been evacuated. Juan de Sanabria died, however, when he was still organising his *armada*.

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[33] Quevedo 1987:122; Service 1954:22-3.

Carlos V therefore laid down in a *Cédula Real* in March 1549 that Juan's son, Diego de Sanabria, was the heir to his titles and their accompanying prerogatives. Nor was Diego able to carry out the commission, because he did not get beyond Santo Domingo. It was therefore finally his mother, Doña Mencía Calderón de Sanabria who tried to carry out the greater part of the undertaking.[34] She was assisted by Juan de Salazar y Espinosa, the founder of Asunción, who had previously also accompanied Alvar Núñez.

The *armada*, which was placed under his command, did not finally set out until the beginning of April 1550, because of difficulties in recruiting sufficient people to join the expedition. It consisted of three ships carrying 300 men and 50 women. The ships were detained by French pirates off the coast of West Africa and the women were robbed of their jewels and the men of their clothing, but the expedition nevertheless arrived at the island of Santa Catalina in September 1550. The expedition obviously had little remaining food, but thanks to the help of the Indians, that problem was solved. A few members of the expedition immediately set off overland to Asunción, but the majority sailed on to the region of Mbiazá (Viaça), about 20 *leguas* south of the island of Santa Catalina. Captain Hernando de Trejo founded the settlement of Puerto de San Francisco there in 1552/3 (Fig. 4.2). The expedition members were forced to stay longer on the coast of Brazil than they wished, partly because of differences of opinion about the progress of the journey, but also because the Portuguese governor at São Vicente did not wish to allow the *conquistadores* to leave San Francisco. Eventually, some of the Spaniards nevertheless succeeded in leaving the coast in May 1555 and reaching Asunción overland via the Paraná in October 1555 without too many setbacks. The company included a number of nubile *doncellas*, who all found a partner when they arrived in Asunción. Their number was considerably smaller than when they left Spain, because a number of them married male members of the expedition *en route*

[34] For the personality of Doña Mencía, see the historical novel by Josefina Cruz (1998).

(especially after their arrival in Brazil). As we shall see, the expedition also proved important for the import of cattle into Paraguay.

The life of the Spaniards who remained behind in Puerto de San Francisco was far from easy. They had not only to contend with the troublesome Portuguese, but also to endure attacks from French and English pirate ships, which unexpectedly appeared off the coast. No support at all arrived from the mother country. The great distance between Asunción and the coast was obviously also far from favourable, although that difficulty seems to have been somewhat reduced after the foundation of Ontiveros in 1554 (see Chapter 5). Partly through these circumstances, Puerto de San Francisco (which was not a town, but only a support point) was not destined to last long. Hernando de Trejo abandoned the place and moved at the end of 1555 with the still remaining Spaniards (including Doña Mencía and her daughters) to Asunción, where the remnant of Sanabria's not very successful *armada* arrived in April 1556.[35] Eventually, of the whole expedition, besides 80 men, only 40 women and children arrived in Paraguay.

Hernando de Trejo was punished by Governor Martínez de Irala with imprisonment for his action, since the evacuation of San Francisco meant that Spain did not have a single inhabited support point (*puerto-cabecera*) on the Atlantic coast where ships could moor and from which expeditions could set out overland to Asunción and possibly to Alto Perú. The evacuation of San Francisco also meant that the Portuguese could expand their sphere of influence in the southern coastal zone and over the whole region to the west of it without much difficulty, and they would indeed do that in the seventeenth century.[36]

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[35] The arrival dates of the different groups vary according to the source. Thus, according to Benítez (1985:52), the last Spaniards of the expedition arrived in Asunción in April 1556, but according to other authors (such as Potthast, see note 36) they arrived at the end of 1555.

[36] For the third *adelantazgo* see: Assunçao 1987:146-9; Benítez 1985:50-2; Cardozo 1967:277-8,487-8; Cardozo 1989:86-8,90-2; Cardozo 1991:199-200; Chaves 1957:25-6; Peña Villamil 1982:78; Potthast 1996:46-7; Quevedo 1984a:178-80; Quevedo 1987:123; Velázquez 1975:15.

5

Settlement foundations in the period 1554-1610

The foundation of new settlements

The establishment of new settlements was intended to prevent the Portuguese from making further advances and to ensure that, following the evacuation of Buen Ayre and the loss of San Francisco, Paraguay again had one or more support points on the coast. In the second half of the sixteenth century several new centres were accordingly founded to this end. This settlement took place, not through expeditions sent from Europe, but from Asunción. In other words, this still young city began to function after 1541, not only as the only settlement of the Spaniards still present in the region and as the administrative centre of the whole la Plata region, but very soon as the centre from which all further colonisation activities were undertaken in the first instance. Some of the settlements founded from Asunción had eventually to be abandoned, but the remainder gradually grew into important towns. Asunción was therefore the mother city (*ciudad madre*) and, as such, indeed *amparo y reparo de la conquista*. It began to perform that role after it had itself existed for only 17 years and still had little urban character. A new era began with the foundation of new settlements. The period of the *conquista* ended in around 1550, from which date colonisation - or rather recolonisation - could begin.

The *Asunceños* received no support from the mother country in their settlement efforts. The Spanish king assumed that the 'Paraguayans' themselves would be fully capable of guarding the territory to the west of the Tordesillas line and, consequently, the members of the expeditions who carried out the various settlement

foundations came from Asunción. Together with other residents of Asunción, they also supplied the materials, the livestock, the agricultural seeds and all the other requisites for the establishment of the new settlements. The foundations were - in other words - carried out by the founders *a su costa y mi(n)sión* (at their own expense). It was incidentally not particularly difficult to find the necessary volunteers to populate the new settlements. Under the governorship of Martínez de Irala, all the Spaniards had been concentrated in Asunción and, moreover, racial mixing immediately got under way after 1537. The 'paradise of Mohammed' (i.e. the province of Paraguay with its informal polygamy) ensured that there was a numerous posterity of mestizoes, the *mancebos de la tierra*. The Spaniards and Creoles were still the dominant element in the foundations carried out in the 1550s, but the first generation of mestizoes had already grown up. The foundations which took place in the south in the 1570s and '80s, however (those of Santa Fe, Buenos Aires, Concepción del Bermejo and Corrientes), already largely involved people who had been born and bred in Paraguay; there were then already about 3,000 mestizoes. Necker has pointed out that there were many discontents among them, because no *encomiendas* remained to be granted to them in the territory occupied so far. The Spaniards also had to contend with increasing opposition from the Guaraníes from the 1550s. They were therefore seeking new possibilities for exploiting native manpower in order to make their own lives easier. The establishment of new settlements can therefore also partly be explained by *push* and *pull* factors within the group of mestizoes and Creoles. A number of Carios were also involved in all the settlement foundations. They accompanied the Spaniards with the tasks of fighting, where necessary, against hostile Indians, getting agriculture started, performing odd jobs etc.[1]

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[1] Cardozo 1991:71-4,201-2; Cardozo 1994:28-9; Chaves 1968:301; Ministerio 1987:23; Necker 1983:7.

Settlement activities in el Guairá

The settlement activities which were initiated from Asunción in the 1550s were directed first at el Guairá, the extensive forest zone extending along the tropic, east of the Río Alto Paraná.[2] It was the region behind the spectacular Saltos del Guairá, also known as the Saltos de Canindeyú. El Guairá is bordered on the north by the Río Paranapanema, on the east by the Serranías del Guarayrú or Caiyú, on the south by the Río Yguazú and on the west by the Río Paraná, The Cordillera de Ybytyrembetá forms the boundary between two different geographical zones of el Guairá: *llano* and *montaña*, which are incidentally both accidented and dissected by a great many rivers and streams. El Guairá was then the most densely populated Guaraní territory. According to Ruy Diaz de Guzmán, over 200,000 Indians lived there, along rivers and on the intervening mountains, in *campos* and in forests. The population may therefore have been more numerous than that in the neighbourhood of Asunción, although this cannot be determined with certainty. What is certain is that el Guairá had a population of at least 150,000, which was dense by the standards of the time. Besides the presence of great potential for arable farming and rich forests, there were also extensive *yerbales* close to the region (especially those of Mbaracayú). There was also - as soon appeared - some iron ore, for instance, in the area of Tambo, near the Río Cano, a tributary of the Piquiry. In brief, el Guairá was a region that appeared attractive in every way for occupation by the Spaniards.[3] Alejo García and Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca were the first Europeans to travel through the region, followed later by Juan de Salazar y Espinosa, Hernando de Trejo, Doña Mencía de Calderón, Ulrico Schmidel and others. They all more or less followed the route that was used by the Indians on their journeys from the coast to the interior, at least as far as the Río Piquiry, which was where the Europeans turned off for Asunción.

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2 El Guairá derived its name from that of an Indian *cacique*.

3 For a description of the region and inhabitants of el Guairá, see, for example, R.I. Cardozo 1938:13-32 and Massare de Kostianovsky 1996:20-3.

The establishment of settlements in el Guairá would mean not only that the Portuguese expansion could be better kept under control, but also that there would be support points on the route to and from the Atlantic Ocean, where the Spaniards had occupied Puerto de San Francisco for some time as *puerto-cabecera*. The new inhabitants of el Guairá were expected to find a livelihood without too much difficulty, especially as there were Indians whom they could employ to farm the land and gather forest products. The Spaniards also naturally hoped that the rumours about the presence of precious stones and metals would prove to be true.[4]

The occupation truly got under way when Governor Martínez de Irala received a delegation of *caciques* from el Guairá in 1553, who asked for his support against the 'Mamelukes' (Portuguese mestizoes) and the Tupís, who had been set against the Guaraníes by the former. Martínez de Irala decided to send an expedition there. It was the first military action to secure the occupation of the eastern territories. After the operation had ended successfully (the Tupís were defeated and promised to live in peace with the Guaraníes), Martínez de Irala undertook to occupy el Guairá speedily by founding a Spanish settlement.

Gandía has asked what was the most crucial motive for this: protection of the Indians and the region against the Portuguese advance or the suspected presence of minerals? Whatever the true reason, the governor redeemed his promise in 1554 by sending Captain García Rodríguez de Vergara to the region with 60 armed men. They settled on the left bank of the Río Paraná about a *legua* upstream from the Saltos del Guairá. Here they founded Villa de Ontiveros (Fig.5.1). Close by was an Indian settlement, the village of *cacique* Canideyú (Canendiyú). The Indians proved to be friendly and performed services on an informal basis (the *encomienda* system had not yet been introduced). The new Spanish settlement was situated in a densely populated region, about 175 *leguas* as the crow flies from Atlantic Ocean, on a site along the *peabirú*.

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[4] The precious metals were not found and it can be deduced from López de Velasco's description (1971:285) of about 1570 that the precious stones were probably amethysts.

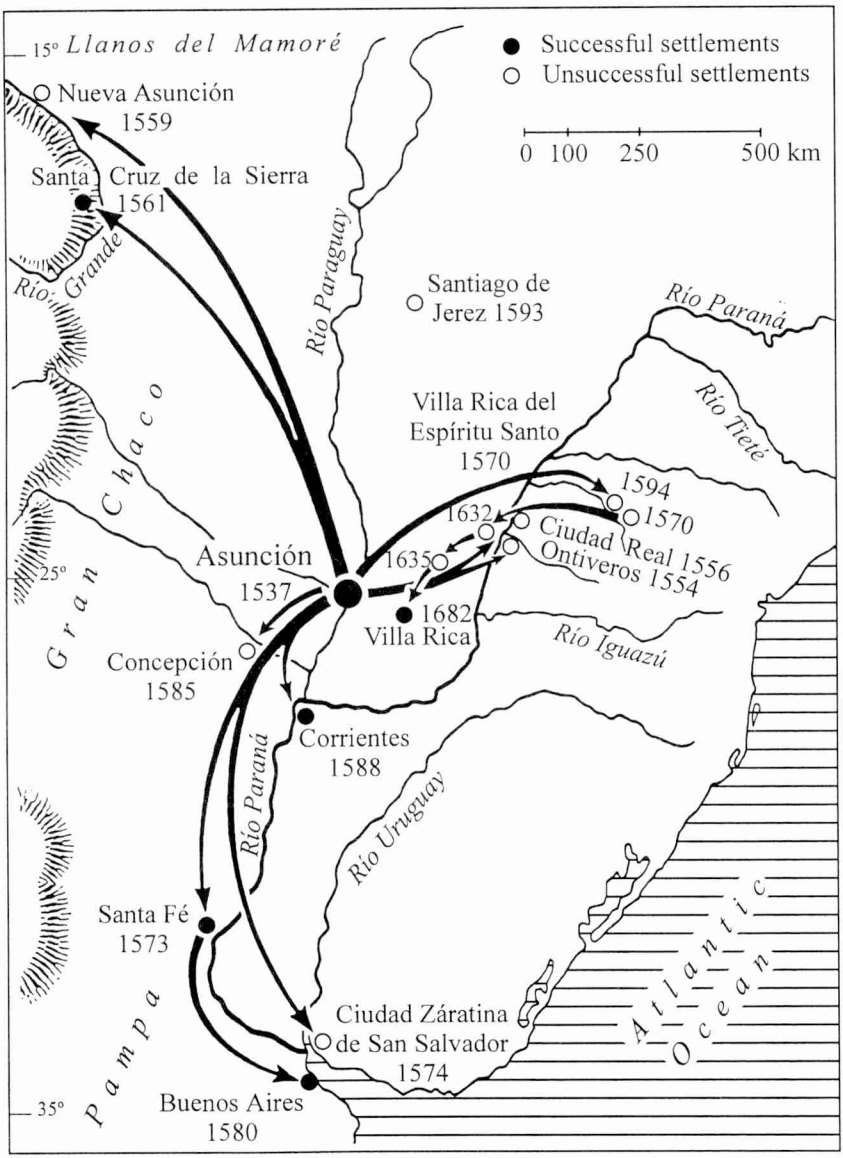

Fig. 5.1. Urban settlements founded from and around Asunción in the second half of the sixteenth century (after Wilhelmy & Rohmeder 1963:407; Velázquez 1975:34; Velázquez 1981:Fig. 3).

According to Azara, the new settlement was populated by Italians, Portuguese, English and French, *gente mala*, who were causing trouble in Asunción and whom Martínez de Irala preferred not to see in the capital.

At the end of 1556, shortly after the death of Martínez de Irala, the young settlement still had very few inhabitants and it was decided to move the location on health and safety grounds. Governor Gonzalo de Mendoza therefore ordered Captain Ruy Díaz de Melgarejo to found a new settlement.[5] The mission was carried out by about 100 soldiers at the end of 1556 (the precise date is not known). The new settlement was situated about three *leguas* farther north, on a warm site in a forested area, and again on the Río Paraná, but now on the right bank of the Río Piquiry near its confluence with the Paraná. It was christened Ciudad Real. Díaz de Melgarejo decided that a church should be built there, he installed a *cabildo*, had an administrative building erected, divided land among the colonists and took a census of the local indigenous population, whom he subsequently shared out. The founder also concentrated there the population of Ontiveros, which was thus merged with Ciudad Real. In addition, migrants from Asunción settled there. The new inhabitants included a number of Spanish *conquistadores* who had been disappointed by the fact that Martínez de Irala had not allocated them any *encomiendas* in 1556. They saw new opportunities in Ciudad Real, because el Guairá had quite a large Indian population, and they were not disappointed. According to Díaz de Guzmán, the contemporary historian, no fewer than 40,000 Indians and their families were registered and allocated to 70 *vecinos feudatarios (encomenderos)*, but later historians consider it more plausible that no more than 4,000 were allocated.[6] Despite their

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5 For a biography of Ruy Díaz de Melgarejo, see: R.I. Cardozo 1939.

6 Ruy Díaz de Guzmán was one of the most prominent *mancebos* of the early colonial period and is regarded as the first native-born historian. His *La Argentina,* written in 1612, is the first history of the la Plata region and was, as far as is known, the first book to have been written by a Paraguayan. In *Anales del Descubrimiento* (1980:9-26), there is a biographical account of Ruy Díaz de Guzmán and a description of his period by Quevedo. The editions of his work are discussed in the same publication (pp. 27-48) by Miguel Alberto Guérin. For a biography of Díaz de Guzmán, see also: Quevedo 1986:29-38.

reputation for indolence, the indigenous population supplied the inhabitants with a reasonable quantity of maize, pulses, cotton, sugar and wax; there were even some grapes grown. The Indians were also skilled weavers and were able to supply their *encomenderos* with cotton and linen textiles. There was, moreover, ample scope for hunting and fishing. Nevertheless, life was certainly not without its difficulties. The poor treatment of the Indians resulted in a reduction in their numbers, partly because they fled. The Indians also suffered sometimes from the aggression of the Portuguese, who generally ignored the border defined in the Treaty of Tordesillas. All in all, Ciudad Real remained a poor and shabby settlement. The diamonds which it was originally thought were to be found there and which promised riches, proved to be quite ordinary stones. There were no more than 50 Spaniards living there in the beginning. However, it had about 300 Spanish inhabitants in 1565, but that figure included mestizoes; including women and children, the population totalled about 4,000. In 1607, no more than 30 *vecinos* were registered in Ciudad Real.

After 1584, Ruy Díaz de Guzmán moved the settlement at the request of the inhabitants and the *cabildo* from its original location (the site of what is now the Brazilian town of Guairá) to about 10 km downstream, to the mouth of the Río Piquiry. The new location (which was again on the right bank of the Piquiry) possessed better soils and appeared to be healthier, but it was still in the vicinity of the Paraná and the Guairá falls. According to Gutiérrez, excavations have shown that Ciudad Real had a more regular street pattern than Asunción, although the rectangular *manzanas* were not all of the same size.

Ciudad Real existed for about 75 years and functioned during its existence as the capital of the province of el Guairá. The town was for a long time an important support point on the route between the interior and the Atlantic Ocean. The later settlements of Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo and Santiago de Jerez fell under its jurisdiction until 1598 (see below). All in all, the occupation remained very sporadic, not to say, scattered. Apart from Ciudad Real, Villa Rica

and various Jesuit mission villages (see Chapter 6), scarcely any further colonisation took place in el Guairá.[7]

Settlement foundation in the northwest

Settlement foundation also took place in a northwesterly direction from Asunción, because the riches of the 'Sierra de la Plata' continued to appeal to the imagination and the Spaniards in Paraguay still regarded a good connection between Alto Perú and Paraguay to be of vital importance. Martínez de Irala therefore considered it desirable that the province of los Xarayes should be settled in order to enlarge the conquered territory. The time arrived to do so in February 1558, when Martínez de Irala was already dead. Lieutenant Nufrio (also spelt Ñufrio, Ñuflo or Nuflo) de Chaves (Chávez) then set out for the north with an expedition consisting of 23 ships and 260 canoes, 158 Spaniards (all of them hackbutters and horsemen) and 1,500 friendly Indians to found a town there. Never before had such a large *armada* set out. They took with them everything needed for a new settlement. During their expedition, the *conquistadores* also hoped to reach the *Laguna del Dorado*, which was spoken about in the whole of the 'Indias' at that time; they would find there not only mountains with gold and silver, but also the source of eternal youth, beautiful women and many other pleasures.

Most of the horsemen and Indians travelled overland; the remainder journeyed northwards up the Río Paraguay. At last they arrived in Puerto de Santiago, the home of the Perabayanes, situated at 17° S latitude and about 225 *leguas* north of Asunción. Here, the little river port of Parabazanes was founded in the territory of

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[7] For the settlement activities in el Guairá described above, see: Azara 1990: 202-3; Benítez 1985:50,56; Cardozo 1938:44-99; Cardozo 1989:105-6; Cardozo 1991:119; Chaves n.d.:78; Gandía 1936:23; Garavaglia 1983:110; González Torres 1995:50; Gutiérrez 1983:27; Jaeger 1957:98-9; Kohlhepp 1973-74:52, 60; Ministerio 1987:24; Mora Mérida 1971:8 (= also 64); Peña Villamil 1982:84-5; Quevedo 1984a:178-82,186; Quevedo 1987:123-4; Sánchez Quell 1983:32; Service 1954:23,50.

the Xarayes (el Jaurú) - who were on good terms with the Spaniards - in July 1558 (see Fig. 4.2).[8] Chaves did not go on, however, to found a more substantial settlement along the Río Paraguay.

The local Indians again told the Spaniards about the land of Candiré, in the *sierras* behind the Río Guaypay, and about the precious metals to be found there. Under the pretext that more favourable sites were to be found for the establishment of a new town farther to the west, Chaves persuaded his people to journey to the west. But he first had the ships in which they had arrived burnt, so that the garrison that he left behind by the river could not return to Asunción. During the journey, which was accompanied by the usual privations, Chaves took no initiative to found a settlement, while the expedition increasingly encountered hostile Indian groups. Eventually, therefore, some 40 *conquistadores* preferred to return in order to carry out the commission - the foundation of a town in the peaceful land of the Xarayes. Chaves let them go, and they returned to Asunción, without founding any settlement. Chaves was finally left with no more than 45 men (excluding Guaraníes) to continue the expedition. On 1 August 1559 he founded a settlement on the right bank of the Río Guapay (= Río Grande or Río Chungurí) in the Llanos de Mamoré, the territory of the Tomacosies - in Chiquitos, Chiriguano. He called it Nueva Asunción as a reminder of the Paraguayan capital, and allocated building plots (*solares*) there. Unfortunately, the settlement did not long survive; the inhabitants moved to Santa Cruz (La Vieja) in 1561. An important underlying motive for this foundation was that Chaves saw in it the possibility of creating an independent *gobernación*, situated between Paraguay and Alto Perú, of which he could become governor. He had perhaps left Asunción with that aim in view.

At about 30 km from Nueva Asunción, Chaves' expedition came upon the men of Andrés Manso, a Spanish captain who had left Peru with the agreement of the viceroy to occupy and populate

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[8] The Portuguese respected Parabazanes as a symbol of Spanish authority until 1777, in which year the Treaty of San Ildefonso was signed (Machuca Martínez 1951:15).

the *llanos* near the 'Sierra de los Chiriguanos'. Both leaders believed that they possessed rights of conquest. In order to avoid further difficulties, the conflict was laid before the viceroy of Peru, Andrés Hurtado de Mendoza, Marquis of Cañete, who allowed himself to be persuaded by Chávez and promoted the territory (the area of Chiquitos - roughly comprising East Bolivia) to a new *gobernación*, which was given the name Mojos (Moxos) or Chiquitos. As we stated earlier, this *desmembración* meant that the area of the province of Paraguay had been reduced. The viceroy appointed his son García Hurtado de Mendoza as governor and Nuflo Chávez as the latter's deputy. That happened in 1560. On 26 February 1561, Chávez founded the town of Santa Cruz de la Sierra (in the neighbourhood of San José de Chiquitos).[9] This new settlement was situated northwest of Nueva Asunción, in the extreme northwest of the Chaco Boreal, near the Río Piray, in the *comarca* of Quirabocoas, the territory of the Corocotosis or Gorgotosis, at the foot of the *cerros* Riquio and Turubo. It was a *comarca* of lagoons and short mountain ridges, with extensive farmland, fruit trees and fishing waters. Chaves allocated the Indians living in the vicinity to the 90 people who settled there as *pobladores*. The majority of the colonists originated from Paraguay (they were partly *mancebos de la tierra*), the remainder from Lima and Charcas. A number of the Guaraníes who accompanied Chaves also settled there. Santa Cruz became the capital of the new *gobernación*, which was consequently also referred to from 1561 as *gobernación* de Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

Although Santa Cruz already lay outside the jurisdiction of Paraguay at its foundation, the town was founded by people from Asunción and its vicinity and the foundation, like that of Nueva Asunción, may rightly be regarded as a Paraguayan act. The fact that Chaves had not founded a town along the Río Paraguay in the territory of the Xarayes was certainly not well received in Asunción, and the fact that the *gobernación* of Mojos had been split from Paraguay was also viewed with displeasure. Chaves' activities were even regarded as a form of treason.

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[9] 28 April is also given as the foundation date.

Santa Cruz received a considerable number of migrants from Paraguay in 1564, while migrants from settlements closer at hand also settled there in the 1560s, but the town did not develop as quickly as was originally hoped. Many Spaniards turned their backs on it in the course of time, and this was one of the reasons for seeking a better location, which was eventually found in 1595.[10]

The advantage of Santa Cruz de la Sierra was that it formed a support point on the route between Paraguay and Alto Perú. The subsequently established settlements of Concepción del Bermejo and Santiago de Jerez (see below) also performed this role.[11]

Fresh activity in el Guairá

The settlement foundations that were undertaken in the period 1570-93 were in the spirit of the *capitulaciones* formulated by the Spanish Crown in 1569 for Juan Ortiz de Zárate, the fourth *adelantado*. The latter was meant to bring 500 Spaniards to the Río de la Plata region, of whom 200 were to be artisans and farmers and the remaining 300, soldiers who could carry out conquests. They also had to include married couples. Ortiz de Zárate was also meant to found four settlements in the area he was supposed to explore, as well as two settlements on the route to Alto Perú and one on the site of the former Puerto del Buen Ayre (or that of San Gabriel on

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[10] The present site of Santa Cruz was settled in 1595; the inhabitants of Santa Cruz la Vieja migrated here in 1601 and 1604, after two previous attempts at relocation between the Río Grande and the Río Piray, under the name of San Lorenzo, had failed. In 1605, Santa Cruz became the seat of a bishop. The nearby settlement of San Lorenzo disappeared; in 1621, all the Spanish colonists from the *llanos* lived in Santa Cruz. For further details, see W. Schoop: *Ciudades Bolivianas* (La Paz: Editorial Los Amigos del Libro, 1981), pp. 191 *et seq.*

[11] For the reconnaissances and settlement activities in the northwest described above, see: Benítez 1985:57-8; Cardozo 1967:291-2; Cardozo 1989:106-10; Chaves n.d.:78; Chaves 1968:267-8; Garavaglia 1978:19; González Torres 1995:47-8; Gutiérrez 1983:15; Machuca Martínez 1951:15; Ministerio 1987:24; Nickson 1993:186; Peña Villamil 1982:86-90; Quevedo 1987:125; Sánchez Quell 1983:32; Sánchez Quell 1995:173-5; Service 1954:50-1; Thomás de Krüeger 1996:79; Wilhelmy & Rohmeder 1963:407.

the opposite bank). Ortiz de Zárate was able to carry out only part of this commission, since he died on 26 January 1576. His rights passed to his son-in-law, Juan Torres de Vera y Aragón, who became the fifth and last *adelantado* of the la Plata region. The *capitulaciones* remained in force *de facto* until 1592, in which year Hernandarias succeeded Juan Torres de Vera y Aragón.

The settlements which were founded in the period 1570-93 were a) Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo and Santiago del Jerez in the east and north; b) San Salvador, Buenos Aires, Santa Fe and Corrientes along the la Plata-Paraná-Paraguay axis; and c) Concepción del Bermejo, in the Chaco (Fig. 5.1).[12] The foundation of each of these settlements and the motives which played a role in their foundation are discussed in greater detail in the following section.

At the beginning of the 1570s, the settlement activity was again first concentrated on el Guairá, where, besides the already existing Ciudad Real, the town of Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo was founded on 14 May 1570.[13] The foundation was the work of Captain Ruy Díaz de Melgarejo, who undertook a long and difficult journey for the purpose eastward through dense forests from Ciudad Real with 40 men, some Indians and 53 horses in February 1570, in the conviction that precious stones and metals were to be found in the centre of the province of Guairá. Díaz de Melgarejo penetrated along a forty *leguas*-long cleared forest path (*picada*) into the territory of *cacique* Coraciberá and founded the projected new settlement on an open site in an area that appeared to be fertile and was inhabited by many Indians. He called it Villa Rica, because of the anticipated precious metals, and added the suffix 'del Espíritu Santo', to commemorate the festival of Pentecost which the Church was celebrating on that Sunday (14 May).[14] He had a *fortaleza* and

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12 Chaves n.d.:79; Velázquez 1975:10-1.

13 Not 1575 or 1576, as stated in some sources.

14 Another interpretation is that little was expected of it and the name Villa Rica may be regarded as an expression of wry humour. Vázquez de Espinosa (1969:451) wrote that stones were to be found in a high mountain ridge, situated at 15 *leguas* from Villa Rica, as large as a coconut. These 'nuts' contained numerous small, pointed, diamond-like stones of a blue, purple, white or other colour. They were very probably amethysts.

a *casa fuerte* built on the spot which he had selected for the new settlement, as well as a small church. He distributed building plots and land for arable and livestock farming. The town plan was less regular than that of Ciudad Real, but there are indications that the intention had been to lay out the streets in a chessboard pattern, as would soon afterwards be required under the *Ordenanzas* of Philip II. The local indigenous population (Ybyrayara), who had already received some instruction in the faith from monks who had accompanied Hernando de Trejo in 1555, were allocated by Melgarejo as *indios de servicio* (labour force) to the *pobladores* of Villa Rica under the prevailing *encomienda* system. They had to lighten the lives of the Spaniards as much as possible. Melgarejo appointed Luis Osorio mayor and furnished the *villa* with a garrison of 24 hackbutters and 14 horses. Before returning to Ciudad Real, he ordered 7 hectares of forest to be cleared for the sowing of maize and other crops to feed the garrison.

The settlement was situated, according to the founder himself, between the source of the Río Piquiry and the Río Huybay (Ivaí), about three *leguas* from Cuaracyberá (an Indian village) and about 40 *leguas* east of the Paraná (Fig. 7.2). The area was called Cuarahy-verá (radiance of the sun) by the Indians. Like Ciudad Real, Villa Rica was situated on the *camino de San Francisco*, i.e. on the route between Asunción and the Atlantic coast. Its primary function was to secure the Guairá region and the passage to the east. In other words, the location was considered to be of strategic importance. As an advance post, Villa Rica was intended to function as a centre of further colonisation in the region between the Río Paraná in the west and the Atlantic Ocean and the Tordesillas demarcation line in the east.

In 1575 Díaz de Melgarejo moved the settlement, with the permission of *adelantado* Ortíz de Zárate, one and a half *leguas* from its original location.

At the beginning, Villa Rica was inhabited by fewer than 150 Spaniards; in 1607 about 100 *vecinos* lived there. In around 1615, Villa Rica occupied third position in population terms (after Asunción and Buenos Aires); a considerable number of Indians lived in the area around the settlement. The colonists generally brought in rich harvests of sugar cane, cotton and yerba, for example, but also

met with resistance from the Indians against the obligations which were imposed on them as *encomendados*. Besides a few semi-precious stones (including amethysts) the only mineral found was a little iron, that Melgarejo himself began to work into iron tools and implements, which were in short supply.[15] The Spaniards further depended on the collection of forest wax and *yerba* in the region of Mbaracayú. The *Villarriqueños* were not very well off.

The link between Asunción and el Guairá was formed by the Río Jejuy Guazú, which was navigable with canoes and other small craft up to near its source, in the Sierra de San Joaquín. From there, travellers followed an overland route used by the Indians (*camino indio*) as far as the waterfalls. From about 1580, several Franciscan mission villages were situated along this route: Mbaracayú, Perico Guazú, Ybyrapariyará and Terecañy. Before then, ordinary Indian settlements were to be found there.

Villa Rica was moved again in the 1590s, because the inhabitants considered that the arable land around the settlement was poor, that they had insufficient cattle, lived too far from their *encomendados* and had to contend with poor communications. They requested that the settlement be moved to the Río Ivaí (Ybay, Huybay) a tributary of the Río Paraná, where they would be able to harvest much more cotton, grapes and sugar cane and where there was also much more game and fish. The move was completed on 24 July 1594. Villa Rica was now situated farther to the north, close to where the Corumbatay flowed into the Ivaí (Fig. 6.1). Communications with Ciudad Real were maintained along the latter river. The relocation was the work of Ruy Díaz de Guzmán, who subsequently founded Santiago de Jerez (see below).[16]

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[15] Remains of small furnaces were subsequently found.

[16] For Villa Rica, see: Benítez 1985:64; Cáceres Zorilla 1962:18; Cardozo 1938: 44-99; Cardozo 1939:65; Cardozo 1967:182-3; Cardozo 1989:189; Durán Estragó 1987:52; Garavaglia 1983:112-4; Gutiérrez 1983:28; Jaeger 1957: 100; Ministerio 1987:24; Mora Mérida 1971:8 (= also 64); Peña Villamil 1982:90-2; Quevedo 1984a:185-6; Quevedo 1987:125; Sánchez Quell 1983: 32-3. The various relocations of Villa Rica after 1632 - after el Guairá was no longer safe - are discussed in Chapter 7.

Town foundations along the la Plata-Paraná-Paraguay axis and on the Bermejo

The purpose of the towns which were founded from Asunción on the lower Paraná was to provide support points to make journeys to and from the la Plata estuary easier. Another, at least equally important, advantage of foundations along the north-south communications axis was, of course, that they would secure the la Plata region for Spain.

The first settlement to be founded downstream was Santa Fé de Cayastá, also known as Santa Fé de la Vera Cruz de Nueva Luganda. The foundation took place officially on 15 November 1573 and was carried out under the leadership of Juan de Garay. The new settlement was situated about halfway along the Asunción-la Plata route, on the west bank of the lower Paraná, near the mouth of the Río Quiloazas, at a place that was subsequently known as Cayastá. It was situated in an area inhabited by the Calchines and Mocoretás. Juan de Garay set out from Asunción to the south on 14 April 1573 in order to carry out the foundation. The expedition made use of one brigantine, eight barques and a large number of *balsas* (consisting of canoes lashed together). It consisted of only 7-9 Spaniards, 75-80 *mancebos de la tierra* and many Indian helpers. The founders took with them agricultural seeds, plants, farm implements, provisions, wood and many other necessities for the foundation; a smithy and some iron also formed part of the equipment. At the same time, a hundred cattle, 55 horses, a flock of sheep and the necessary pigs were driven south overland. A town plan designed round a *plaza* was set out on the chosen site, *solares* and *estancias* were distributed among the founders, an *ejido* was separated off, the Indians were registered and a *cabildo* was formed, consisting predominantly of *mancebos*. Once the settlement had been established, an overland route was created to Córdoba, that had been founded from Peru on 23 July 1573.[17]

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[17] Assunçao 1987:153; Benítez 1985:65; Cardozo 1989:136-8; Cardozo 1991:73; González Torres 1995:46; Martínez Cuevas 1987:37; Ministerio 1987:24; Quevedo 1987:126; Sánchez Quell 1983. The figures of the number of head of cattle taken along and of the Spaniards and *mancebos* involved in the founda-

Moving farther to the south, Juan de Garay next defeated about a thousand Charruás in the Banda Oriental (now Uruguay) who were led by Zapicán. These Indians had destroyed the simple settlement of San Salvador, which had been founded in 1573 by *adelantado* Juan Ortiz de Zárate himself on the mainland of the Banda Oriental on his arrival at the island of San Gabriel after his voyage from Europe. The defeat which Juan de Garay inflicted on the Indians enabled Ortiz de Zárate to found a new settlement, near the ruined San Salvador, on 30 May 1574. This new settlement, situated on the left bank of the Río San Salvador, was given the name Ciudad Zaratina de San Salvador. In reality, it was little more than a small collection of simple *ranchos*. The Indians remained hostile and some of the defenders soon fled to Tucumán. The town survived for only a short time. The Indians' attacks and the weakened defence led the Spaniards to decide to abandon this support point on 20 July 1577. Most of the inhabitants went to Asunción or Santa Fe.[18]

The renewed foundation of Buenos Aires was more successful. It was ceremonially performed on 11 June 1580, again by Juan de Garay, who was now governor of Paraguay. The settlement was known officially as Ciudad de la Santísima Trinidad/Puerto de Santa María de Buenos Aires, but was called in practice simply Buenos Aires. At this renewed foundation, Garay received the support of 10 Spaniards, 50 or somewhat more *mancebos de la tierra* and a large number of Indians. Asunción supplied four ships, while Garay and his men assembled all kinds of necessities, such as 1,000 horses, 3-500 cows, the necessary small livestock, seeds and weapons at their own expense. The Spanish Crown did not provide any support. Again, part of the expedition travelled overland, because the livestock were driven to their destination on foot - via Santa Fe - under the supervision of Alonso de Vera y Aragón ('*cara de perro*') and Hernando Arias de Saavedra. The remaining

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tion varies somewhat according to the source. This also applies to the other foundations subsequently discussed in this section.

[18] Cardozo 1989:145-6,151-2; González Torres 1995:46; Kleinpenning 1995:14; Quevedo 1987:126; Traversoni & Kampf 1976:16.

Spaniards and Indians journeyed down the river, using not only the ships, but also a large number of canoes and *balsas*.

With this renewed foundation, an old wish of the *Asunceños* was fulfilled. Thanks in part to the support which Asunción and Santa Fe were able to give in the early stages, the inhabitants of Buenos Aires succeeded much better this time in ensuring the settlement's survival. The Creoles and mestizoes were able to achieve what the first Spaniards scarcely managed to do in the years 1536-40. Times had changed, however, and it was moreover - according to Amarilla Fretes - truly the intention in 1580 to found a real and permanent city; Pedro de Mendoza did not really have that intention in 1536. An important motive for founding Buenos Aires was the expectation that the inhabitants of the la Plata region would be allowed to engage in trade with the mother country.

The new settlement was situated half a *legua* north of the 1536 settlement, on a somewhat higher site; the old site ('el Riachuelo') had been found to be less suitable, partly because of the risk of floods. Since what was founded now was not a temporary *fuerte*, but a true *ciudad*, *solares* and *chacras* were allocated and a *ejido* was also demarcated. The jurisdiction was defined, a *cabildo* was established and administrators were appointed. Because the site was flat, a chessboard pattern could be readily adopted for the layout and the planners could therefore conform with the instructions issued in 1573. The *planta urbana* had a width of 16 blocks (*cuadras; manzanas*) on the river front and a depth of 9 *cuadras*. Six *manzanas* were reserved for the construction of a fort, a central square (*plaza mayor*), three religious houses and a hospital; the others were used for housing plots and as *chacras*. The *suertes de estancia*, for livestock farming, were given a depth of one and a half *leguas* (c. 6,500 m) and a width of 300 *varas* (260 m). Like Santa Fé, the town was an important support point on the route to and from Asunción.[19]

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[19] Amarilla Fretes 1942:51-3; Benítez 1985:71; Cáceres Zorrilla 1962:19; Cardozo 1967:221; Cardozo 1989:162-4; Cardozo 1991:73-4; Chaves 1968: 324-7; Lafuente Machaín 1936a:13; Larrouy 1905; Machuca Martínez 1951:17; Martínez Cuevas 1987:37; Ministerio 1987:24; Peña Villamil 1982:99-103; Quevedo 1987:126; Sánchez Quell 1983:38-40.

Another important foundation was that of Concepción de Nuestra Señora del Río Bermejo (Concepción de la Buena Esperanza) on 14 April 1585. As appears from the name, this settlement was not situated on the lower Paraná, but on the right bank of the Río Bermejo or Ypytá, about thirty *leguas* from where it entered the Río Paraguay, in the territory of the Mbocovíes (Guaycurúes). The foundation was carried out under Governor Juan de Torres Navarrete. The expedition which was to carry out the foundation was led by Alonso de Vera y Aragón, who took with him 135 (possibly 150) soldiers, all of them *mancebos de la tierra*, as well as 1,000 horses, over 300 cows and 50 (or 150) pairs of oxen, and naturally all the other things needed for founding a settlement. Everything had again been assembled in Asunción by the town population and the first colonists. The expedition was altogether more extensive than those which had been organised for the foundations of Santa Fe and Buenos Aires. The participants included Hernando Arias de Saavedra (Hernandarias), who would later gain fame as governor. He led the soldiers. Before Alonso de Vera commenced the foundation, he had first reconnoitred the area extensively, as far as the valley of Tarija. Here, too, a *cabildo* was instituted at the official foundation (with Hernandarias as the first *alcalde*) and a jurisdiction was demarcated. Lands were distributed and Indians allocated. The new settlement served not only to secure territorial claims, but had also to serve as a support point in the Chaco, which was dominated by 'barbarous' Indians and, as such, facilitate trade and traffic with Tucumán and Alto Perú.

In 1591 Governor Juan Torres de Vera y Aragón decided that Alonso de Vera should also establish two Indian reductions in the area of Concepción del Bermejo, in order to reduce the opposition of the indigenous population. De Vera founded the reduction of Mataráes and that of Frentones in 1591 (see Fig. 9.1).

Concepción was favourably situated in relation to the territories of various groups of Chaco Indians and as a communications link between Asunción and Tucumán. The place flourished and became the centre of a considerable commerce for those days. According to Azara, the rather numerous Indians initially offered no resistance, but the *encomenderos* mistreated them so much that they revolted. At first, their attacks could be beaten off with support from Asun-

ción, but a new situation arose after the *provincia gigante* was subdivided in 1620-1 and Concepción del Bermejo was added to the *gobernación* of Río de la Plata. In 1632/1633 the town was again attacked by the Indians. The inhabitants - irritated by the absence of support - decided to leave the settlement in 1633. According to Kanter, they escaped to Corrientes. As a result, Concepción ceased to exist and the attempt to establish a permanent support point on the route to Tucumán had failed. Santiago de Guadalcázar, that was founded in 1628 by Ledesma for the same reason at the confluence of the Río Centa with the Tarija, incidentally held out for an even shorter time, because it was destroyed again in 1635 after a long run of disasters.[20]

Lastly, San Juan de Vera de las Siete Corrientes was ceremonially founded by Alonso de Vera y Aragón on 3 April 1588, on behalf of Governor Juan Torres de Vera y Aragón. The town was sited just south of the confluence of the Paraguay with the Paraná, on the left bank of the latter river. About 150 men and 40 women from Asunción, a total of nearly 200 persons, including about hundred unmarried persons, participated in the foundation. They also included Hernando Arias de Saavedra who, according to Cardozo, was, as military leader, the true hero of the foundation. The foundation took place in a manner that was comparable with that of the places referred to above. Here again, all necessities were provided from Asunción (and Santa Fé), including 1,500 horses and 3-4,000 head of cattle, which reached their destination overland under the supervision of Hernandarias. Many other things were shipped along the river in 48 *balsas*, a vessel (*bajel*) and two brigantines. *Mancebos de la tierra* again made up the main contingent of colonists and Indians again participated in the foundation. Corrientes was intended to be a support point along the route to and from the sea, more specifically between Asunción and Santa Fe. It

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[20] Azara 1836:II (=2) and 15 (in other part of the document); Benítez 1985:73; Cáceres Zorrilla 1962:20; Chaves n.d.:79; Cardozo 1967:146-7; González Torres 1995:46; Gutiérrez 1983:14; Machuca Martínez 1951:17; Martínez Cuevas 1987:36-7; Ministerio 1987:24; Peña Villamil 1982:104-5; Quevedo 1987:126-7; Sánchez Quell 1983:34; Stunnenberg 1993:19.

goes without saying that Corrientes also had a military character at the beginning of its existence as a frontier town.[21]

Settlement activity in the far north

As we have seen above, the settlement foundation activities in the 1570s and '80s were largely concentrated in the Paraguay-Paraná corridor between Asunción and the Río de la Plata, where a total of four towns were founded. Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo and Concepción del Bermejo were two other new settlements from that time. At the beginning of the 1590s attention turned to the northern periphery.

In as early as 1579, Juan de Garay had carried out several reconnaissances in the territory of the Ñuará (Azara: the province of Ytaty) after his return from Peru.[22] He had pacified the Indians and then commissioned Ruy Díaz de Melgarejo to establish a Spanish settlement there. In 1580 Díaz de Melgarejo had set out for the north with 60 *mancebos* and Spaniards and the necessary equipment and materials and, in March, had founded the town of Santiago de Jerez in the province of the Ñuarás, also known as Nueva Vizcaya. The settlement was situated in what is now Mato Grosso, a good distance north of the Río Apa (the present border river). The site was formed by a hill on the right bank of the Río Mbotetey (= Río Miranda). The settlement proved, however, to have an unfavourable location, it could not withstand the attacks of *indios bárbaros*, and quickly disappeared.[23]

Captain Ruy Díaz de Guzmán made a second attempt thirteen years later. On 24 March 1593, he again founded, with about 30

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21 Assunçao 1987:159; Cáceres Zorrilla 1962:20; Cardozo 1989:175-6; Chaves 1968:353 *et seq.*; Cardozo 1967:133-4; Martínez Cuevas 1987:37; Ministerio 1987:24; Peña Villamil 1982:106-10; Quevedo 1987:127; Sánchez Quell 1983:34.

22 The Ñuará formed a subgroup of the Itatines. Little distinction was yet made at that time and the name Itatines was used to indicate all the Indian groups between the Río Miranda and the Río Apa (Gadelha 1986:152).

23 Azara 1990:204; Cardozo 1989:159-60; González Torres 1995:48; Peña Villamil 1982:110-2.

vecinos from Ciudad Real and Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo, a settlement bearing the name Santiago de Jerez. The motive was again that the place would hamper the advance of the Portuguese and enable better and speedier contacts to be made between Paraguay and Alto Perú. According to Peña Villamil, Ruy Díaz de Guzmán's act was a question of prestige and the administrators in Asunción (particularly Hernandarias) were thinking more at that time of further expansion to the south. The new Santiago de Jerez was first built on the Río Salvador (also known as: Ivinheima or Yaguarey) but, in the same year, Ruy Díaz de Guzmán moved the settlement a considerable distance to the northwest, relocating it close to its first site on the right bank of the Mbotetey and less far from the Río Paraguay. At its new location, there was greater potential for livestock farming. Another reason was that more effective resistance could be offered to the advance of the Portuguese west of the Paraná. The settlement was now situated about 40 *leguas* east of the Río Paraguay. The distance from Asunción was about 125 *leguas* as the crow flies. Thanks to the foundation of Santiago de Jerez, the border of Paraguay was shifted about 140 km northwards.

A regiment was formed and a *cabildo* was chosen on 1 April 1593, which gave the place the status of a 'town'. *Solares* and other lands were distributed and the first inhabitants were also given Indians in *encomienda*. Over 30 *vecinos* lived there in 1594, supplied with weapons and horses. The local Indians were farmers, which meant that the food supply was probably more or less assured. Cotton and wax could be gathered on a large scale in the forests and *campos*. Moreover, the inhabitants had a good hope that the district would yield precious metals.

Ñuará Indians were shared out by Governor Juan Ramírez de Velasco in 1596 and 1597. The beneficiaries constantly tried to make use of their services, but the Indians were rebellious and refused to cooperate. As a result, the Spaniards had insufficient labour available. Moreover, communications with Asunción were difficult, not least because Payaguá Indians constantly made the Río Paraguay unsafe. Trade of any significance was consequently scarcely possible. All in all, life in Santiago de Jerez was far from flourishing. Portuguese adventurers and slave traders (*bandeirantes*)

fell upon the indigenous population from time to time and it was difficult to provide the place with the necessary support from Asunción.

In 1605, there were only 15 white *vecinos* living in Santiago, where they had difficulty in maintaining themselves and hoped eventually to have greater success in employing the Indians. According to Vázquez de Espinosa, the settlement contained about 60 *vecinos* in around 1628 and quite a lot Indians lived in the vicinity. There were also reductions. He named specifically Yputú, Guarambaré and Los Litatines. The Indians were '*grandes labradores*' and supplied the town with the necessary produce. Many cattle grazed in the neighbourhood of the settlement. Various fruits and sugar cane were produced and large quantities of wax, honey and turpentine could be found in the forests. That may have been true but, in reality, the settlement was particularly isolated. Such contacts as there were with Santa Cruz and Potosí were very sporadic. They were rather more frequent with Asunción, but far from easy. The products that were gathered in the forest reached the market of the capital with great difficulty (via a route that ran through Salto del Guairá). According to Garavaglia, Santiago de Jerez remained a *poblado pobrísimo*. He wrote that, in its best period, it had no more than 40 *vecinos* (fewer than the number given by Vázquez de Espinosa). The settlement was attacked by the Portuguese in 1632 and surrendered (see Chapter 6). As a distant advance post, however, Santiago performed a strategic role for about forty years.[24] The foundation of Santiago de Jerez was the last of the settlement foundation activities of the sixteenth century.

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[24] For Santiago de Jerez, see: Benítez 1985:74; Cardozo 1989:189-90; Gadelha 1986:151-2; Garavaglia 1983:115-6,121; Gónzalez Torres 1995:48; Ministerio 1987:24; Peña Villamil 1982:110-2; Quevedo 1984a:187-8; Quevedo 1987: 127; Sánchez Quell 1983:33; Vázquez de Espinosa 1969:451; Velázquez 1975:23; Velázquez 1995 (=1978):607.

Balance sheet of Spanish settlement foundations up to 1600

Drawing up the balance sheet of the settlement foundation activities undertaken by the Spaniards (including Creoles and mestizoes) during the period 1537-93, we find a fairly impressive list of support points and larger settlements.

During that period, the following centres had been founded along the lower Paraná, the lower Uruguay, the Bermejo and the Paraguay - proceeding from south to north: Buenos Aires (1580), San Juan (1542), San Salvador/Ciudad Zaratina de San Salvador (1573/74), Sante Fé (1573), Corrientes (1588), Concepción del Bermejo (1585), Asunción (1537), La Candelaria (Puerto de Ayolas) (1537), San Fernando (1548), Puerto de los Reyes (1543) and Parabazanes (1558).

Three Spanish settlements were founded in el Guairá and southern Mato Grosso: Ontiveros/Ciudad Real (1554/56), Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo (1570) and Santiago de Jerez I+II (1580/1593).

On the Atlantic coast, Puerto de Vera (1541) and Puerto de San Francisco (1552/53) were founded - without a lasting result - while Nueva Asunción (1559) and Santa Cruz de la Sierra (1561) were founded in the far northwest.

Not all these settlements survived for very long, but the list nevertheless remains impressive, certainly if one takes into account the small number of *conquistadores* (ultimately 1,000-1,200 Spaniards and, in around 1550, a first generation of mestizoes). It appears clearly from the above summary that Asunción rightly deserved the epithet '*sembradora de ciudades*' ('sower of cities').

Looking at the distribution of the settlements, it is striking to note that they were situated many hundreds of kilometres apart in an area extending about 2000 km from south to north and nearly as extensive from east to west. Between the settlements, there were no rural areas populated by Spanish colonists or small intermediate settlements, to serve as rest and support points. The isolation was therefore great and all the settlements were small or very small. They were inhabited in the beginning by no more than a few dozen or, at most, a hundred families of Spanish *vecinos* (including Creoles and mestizoes), many of them married to Guaraní women. The settlements formed secluded outposts in the forest or small

harbours on a river or on the coast. The majority consisted of simple huts of timber, mud, reeds and palm leaves.

Table 5.1. List of Spanish towns founded in the province of Paraguay during the period 1537-1600 (1).

Settlement	Date of foundation	Principal founder
Asunción	15-8-1537	Juan de Salazar
San Juan*	1542	Juan de Romero
Ontiveros* (Ciudad Real)*	1554/1556	García Rodríguez de Vergara/Ruy Díaz de Melgarejo
Nueva Asunción*	1-8-1559	Nuflo de Chaves
Santa Cruz de la Sierra	26-2-1561	Nuflo de Chaves
Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo I*	14-5-1570	Ruy Díaz de Melgarejo
San Salvador*	1573	Juan Ortiz de Zárate
Santa Fe	15-11-1573	Juan de Garay
Ciudad Záratina de San Salvador*	30-5-1574	Juan Ortiz de Zárate
Buenos Aires	11-6-1580	Juan de Garay
Concepción del Bermejo*	14-4-1585	Alonso de Vera y Aragón
Corrientes	3-4-1588	Alonso de Vera y Aragón
Santiago de Jerez I*	March 1580	Ruy Díaz de Melgarejo
Santiago de Jerez II*	24-3-1593	Ruy Díaz de Guzmán

(1) For the puertos and other small support points, see Table 4.1.
* abandoned in the course of time.

The explanation for this distribution pattern lies in the strategic role which had been assigned to the settlements: they had to prevent the Portuguese from occupying a large part of the area west of the line of Tordesillas and had to provide the inland capital of Asunción with essential support points along its west-east and north-south connections with the sea and - to a more limited extent - along the route to Alto Perú.

As we have seen, a number of *puertos* and *ciudades* had to be abandoned, but others were destined to have a more permanent existence. More specifically, it was the towns on the lower Paraná and the Río Paraguay which were most easily able to survive, although Corrientes and Santa Fe also had a somewhat precarious existence over a longer period. Buenos Aires became a closed-off

port quite soon after its foundation, but nevertheless prospered relatively well, thanks to the opportunities for smuggling. The settlements in el Guairá and the far north and northwest, by contrast (except for Santa Cruz), did not survive. Their position was more isolated, they had little chance of building up a firm economic basis and colonising their hinterlands, and they also suffered from the aggression of the Portuguese. Villa Rica survived, but had to be relocated several times (see Chapter 7). Concepción del Bermejo, on the other hand, disappeared permanently from the map; its situation was too peripheral and it was surrounded by an increasingly hostile indigenous population (Chapter 6).[25]

Luis de Velasco, the viceroy at Lima, eventually became concerned at the end of the sixteenth century at the many colonisation activities undertaken by the inhabitants of Asunción. He decided in 1598 that Asunción should not found any further settlements, because the foundations took place at the expense of the population growth and the development of Asunción itself.[26]

Settlements created on the properties of the Dominicans and Mercedarians

Settlement foundation was not only an activity of the Spaniards operating predominantly from Asunción. The religious orders also made a considerable contribution to the settlement process, starting in the second half of the sixteenth century.

One of the orders which was active in Paraguay in the early colonial period was the Order of Merced, which provided mainly education and pastoral care. The Mercedarians were already acquiring lands in the valley of the Areguá in the sixteenth century and eventually came into the possession of a considerable area of land extending as far as the shore of the lake of Ypacaraí, lying about 35 km east of Asunción. With the employment of Negro slaves (including mulattoes), the Mercedarians succeeded in establishing a

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[25] Velázquez 1981:43-5; Velázquez 1986:172.

[26] Sánchez Quell 1983:35,42.

productive arable farming on their properties, which provided them with food and income. The Order obtained its first slaves on 9 April 1597 through a gift from Governor Ramírez de Velasco, who noted that the priests were living in great poverty. The slaves had belonged to Isabel López, who had died a short time previously without leaving an heir. The Mercedarians obviously provided pastoral care for their workers. The population concentration led in the course of time to the creation of the village of Areguá on the west side of the lake, but the origins of this settlement date back to the sixteenth century, which is why it has been mentioned in this chapter.[27] Besides its function as a place of residence for the estate population, the settlement (*ranchería*), provided with a chapel, also served a defensive function. It had to protect Asunción and its environs against attacks. Besides slaves, it was also inhabited by free Negroes and mulattoes. According to Azara, the fathers themselves still did not wish to refer to a *pueblo* even at the end of the eighteenth century, probably because this evoked associations with the (official) *pueblos de indios*, but over 200 blacks were living on their lands at that time. They formed a permanent, unpaid population of farm labourers whose maintenance was provided by the fathers.[28]

The Dominicans engaged in mainly apostolic and educational activities in the capital and near vicinity. No more than the Mercedarians, did they found mission villages for the Indians, something which, as we shall see below, was a practice of the Franciscans and Jesuits. Besides various properties in Asunción and scattered agricultural lands elsewhere (which they leased out), the Dominicans also possessed for their own maintenance a large cattle ranch, on which lived a large group of Negroes, mulattoes and zambos. This *estancia* was called Tavapy and was situated between the Cerro de

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27 Areguá was one of the three villages inhabited by Negroes and mulattoes (*pueblos de negros y mulatos*); the others were Tavapy (see below) and Emboscada (see Chapter 8).

28 Azara 1990:226; Benítez 1985:98; Gutiérrez 1983:293; Mora Mérida 1973:-201; Pastore 1972:84; Williams 1974a:13. Areguá was initially (at least according to Ortiz 1973:14) a *pueblo de indios*, which was created in around 1540 to accommodate a number of Indians concentrated by Governor Martínez de Irala during his first period of office.

Acahay and the Lago de Ypoá. The ranch was one of the best in Paraguay. Thanks in part to these properties, the fathers were richer than the Mercedarians and Franciscans. The lands of the *estancia* had originally been given by Governor Felipe de Cáceres (1567-72) to his lieutenant Martín Suárez de Toledo by *merced real* of 12 June 1571, together with the *parcialidad indígena*, Boraitín, who was living there. Suárez de Toledo, however, gave the land in his turn to the Dominicans in 1593, and they extended the property with two purchases. In 1653 they acquired the Isla de Tavapy and, two years later, they extended their property for the second time for 200 *pesos de moneda de la tierra* (payment in kind) and 50 masses. The *estancia* remained in the possession of the Dominican friary of Santo Domingo in Asunción until 1823, after which it became state property. The Indian settlement eventually made way for a village of Negroes and mulattoes. The friary acquired its first five slaves in the sixteenth century, after which their number grew considerably. They were instructed by the fathers in the Christian faith and engaged as workers. On the estate, besides a chapel dedicated to the Virgen del Rosario, there was a pilgrimage chapel of San Pedro Mártir, serving the Spanish and Creole colonists of the vicinity and the Indians and Negroes. According to Aguirre, who visited the Tavapy *estancia* at the end of the eighteenth century, the Dominicans had at that time about 400 slaves. The free Negroes and mulattoes were nearly as numerous, so that the total population was about 800. The population was so numerous that a true village, Tavapy, had arisen by the end of the eighteenth century. Long before that time, however, a more modest population concentration (*ranchería*) already existed there with a *plaza*, which is why Tavapy has also been mentioned in this chapter. The settlement was strengthened with Guaraní help at the time of Governor Juan Diez de Andino (1663-71) in order to give it better protection against the attacks of the Payaguáes and other Guaycurúes.[29] Azara also remarks with reference to Tavapy that the fathers really did not wish to refer to a *pueblo*, but that nevertheless a population of 300 slaves

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[29] Benítez 1985:100; Cooney 1979c:181; Durán Estragó 1983:187-8; Gutiérrez 1983:31,293-4: Pastore 1972:84-5; Williams 1974a:13.

and a further 338 *amparados* ('serfs') lived on their estate in around 1785.[30]

Relocation and concentration of the indigenous population up to 1580

After the arrival of the Spaniards, some Indians continued to live in the villages such as they had always built themselves and in the places which they themselves had chosen. Others, however, chose new locations. Because the Indians quickly began to relocate their villages and hamlets, mainly in order to escape the plundering and exploitation of the Spaniards, whose *rancheadas* (predatory raids) also led to the disappearance of a number of villages and hamlets, it is almost impossible to indicate precisely where the various indigenous settlements were situated at the time of the *conquista*.

A number of villages were moved, voluntarily or compulsorily, at the Spaniards' request to enable better use to be made of the indigenous labour. Martínez de Irala, for example, ordered Terecañy, Candelaria, Mbaracayú and Ybyrapariyara (Ybyrapariyá) to be created with Indians living on the other side of the Río Monday ('*más alla del Monday*') in 1539; in the province of Itatín, Captain Juan Caballero Bazán founded the *encomienda* villages of Taré (Tarey), Bomboy and Caaguazú on the orders of Governor Hernandarias in 1592.[31] All the villages remained under the authority of their own *caciques* (preferably persons who were favourably disposed towards the Spaniards).

From 1556, the year in which the *encomienda* system was introduced into Paraguay, a number of *encomenderos* also started to concentrate the Indians entrusted to them into settlements, often into sizeable villages, nearly always because such relocation and concentration simplified the control over the Indians (including their

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30 Azara 1990:233. According to the same Azara, Governor Domingo Martínez de Irala had already founded Tavapy in 1538 with a group of friendly Indians, but this is incorrect. In the modern period, Tavapy was renamed Roque González de Santa Cruz.

31 Azara 1990:244; González Torres 1995:48.

mobility) and the use of their labour. The population transfers also facilitated the organisation of artisan activities in the villages and the occupation of suitable lands by the Spaniards. The closer to Asunción the Indian settlements were, the better. The concentration usually took place with the agreement of the authorities. The result was the creation of villages comprising several *cacicazgos*. The *encomendero* was represented by a *poblero* in these villages. The *encomenderos* were generally opposed to the Indians periodically moving their villages.[32]

Service believes - in line with Azara - that 11 permanent Indian villages had already been created through the agency of the Spaniards in 1538. Then no such villages were created for some time, but the process started again from 1556 - when the *encomienda* system was introduced. From this point, 13 *encomienda* villages were created in el Guairá. After the foundation of Villa Rica de Espíritu Santo, a further 14 new indigenous villages were created up to 1610.

According to Service (citing Azara), the villages concerned in 1538 were Areguá, Altos, Yoís, Tobaty, Ypané, Guarambaré, Atyrá, Maracayú, Terecañy, Ybyraparyá and Candelaria. He noted that Azara had dated the foundation of two others (Itá and Yaguarón) to 1536. There is some doubt about the accuracy of these dates. The 13 *encomienda* villages established in el Guairá were listed as: Loreto, San Ignacio Miní, San Xavier, San José, Anunciación, San Miguel, San Antonio, San Pedro, Santo Tomé, Ángeles, Concepción, San Pablo and Jesús y María. Here, too, Service bases himself on Azara. According to González Torres, the foundations were carried out by Nuflo de Chaves, on orders received from Governor Martínez de Irala in September 1555. The names listed correspond with those of the mission villages set up by the Jesuits in el Guairá after 1610 (Chapter 6). The fathers did indeed partly transform, relocate and/or combine already existing *encomienda* settlements (such as San Ignacio de Ypaumbucú) at that time. It is otherwise difficult to understand why they - as outspoken opponents of the *encomienda* system - should acquiesce in some of the Indians continuing to work for the Spaniards. They did, however, also probably found villages to house Indians who had remained outside the

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32 Garavaglia 1983:106,285; Rivarola Paoli 1993:62,74; Susnik 1965:157-60.

system until then. Scepticism about Azara's information is therefore justified. According to Fassbinder, he is even completely mistaken.[33] The 14 villages in the region of Villa Rica were called (again according to Azara): Perico Guazú, Jejuí, Curumiay, Pacurú, Ohomá, Guacarás, Baradero, Itaty, Santa Lucía, Tarey, Bomboy, Caaguazú, Caazapá, Yuty.[34]

Chaves comments that Martínez de Irala's activities did not take the form of genuine foundations, as Azara suggests. He and his successors (like Ramírez de Velasco), in fact, limited themselves to the compulsory concentration of the Indians in already existing settlements, which thereby became somewhat larger and were then called *pueblos*. This generally happened after their resistance had been broken and the population of a number of hamlets (or the numbers of the more dispersed Indians) had dwindled considerably. The authorities were incidentally acting in the spirit of various *Cédulas Reales*, which urged concentration of the indigenous population in special settlements.[35]

Little more than what is stated above is known about the early relocation and concentration activities of the Spanish administrators and *encomenderos*, partly because many villages did not survive for very long. It may be assumed that little or nothing changed in the appearance of the villages, except perhaps for the building of a small chapel. Official intervention was limited to the choice of a new site and sometimes it was also decided to merge a couple of villages. An important 'internal' change in the villages set up by the *encomenderos* was that, in a number of cases, the *encomendero* and his wife came to live there temporarily. It was more usual, however, to appoint a *poblero*, an official who had to ensure on behalf of the *encomendero* that the Indians met their obligations. The principal *poblados* of this type were the villages of the Mbaracayú region, more specifically: San Andrés de Mbaracayú, San Pedro de Terecañy and San Francisco de Ybyrapariyara, to which Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria was later added. These settlements survived for a longer period.[36]

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33 Fassbinder 1926:23.

34 González Torres 1995:50; Service 1954:52.

35 Chaves 1976:66-7.

36 Garavaglia 1983:285.

It was, in fact, not until about 1575 that the mission work among the indigenous population really got under way. It was from that date that several dozen reductions were established, a number of which grew into larger - still extant - settlements. In the first instance, it was the Franciscans who initiated the missionary activity (see below); the Jesuits joined in from 1610 (see Chapter 6) and, in fact, continued the Franciscans' work.

Settlements founded by the Franciscans, 1575-c.1615

The Franciscans left a significant stamp on the settlement pattern of colonial Paraguay.[37] In contrast to the Dominicans and Mercedarians, they did not own any estates on which to found settlements, nor were they mainly active in Asunción. At the end of the sixteenth century they began to devote themselves systematically and almost wholly to the pacification, conversion and civilising of the Indian population and, in the process, founded many new settlements, many of them based on existing concentrations of Indians.

Soon after the foundation of Asunción, a number of Franciscans had come to the la Plata region (including Bernardo de Armenta and Alonso de Lebrón, who arrived in Asunción with *adelantado* Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca in 1542), but their numbers were very small and, moreover, some of them left again after a short time. Thus no mission villages (*pueblos de indios*) were founded at that time, despite the fact that the Spanish legislation prescribed at an early stage that the Indians had to be brought together into concentrated settlements (*reducciones*) in order to keep them as far as possible outside the Spaniards' sphere of influence, to facilitate their conversion, to promote their gradual transition to another

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[37] Detailed attention has been paid to their work, particularly by Durán Estragó (1987, 1988, 1990, 1992a, 1992b). See also: Caballero 1978, Flores G. de Zarza 1986, Molina 1948, Molina 1954 and Ríos 1979. The publications by Oró (1991) and Salas (2000) are predominantly biographical studies of Father Luis Bolaños.

(Spanish and, therefore, civilised) way of life and to make it easier to govern them.[38]

The initiative for such foundations was first taken by the fathers Luis de Bolaños and Alonso de San Buenaventura, who came to Paraguay in 1575, together with a number of other priests, in the company of the *adelantado* Juan Ortíz de Zárate. They arrived at a time of considerable unrest in Paraguay, because the Spaniards were forcing the Indians to work for them under the *encomienda* system and they were resisting this. As a result, colonisation had more or less come to a standstill. Military action against the rebellious Indians was having little effect. The local administrators increasingly realised that other - more peaceful - measures were needed to restore law and order among the indigenous population of the province and to bring their territories under control. The Franciscans were also convinced that pacification by peaceful means was the only solution. If the Indian population could be concentrated in special villages (in conformity with the Spanish legislation), the natives would, moreover, be better protected and could be more easily converted to Christianity. In other words, the Franciscans set themselves up as defenders of the Indians whom they converted or hoped to convert, while furthering their integration into the colonial society through their pacification and acceptance of the *encomienda* system. Their activities, which helped the colonial regime, incidentally fitted wholly within the policy of concentration in reductions, which the viceroy Francisco de Toledo had set in train in the viceroyalty of Peru (of which Paraguay formed a part) from Lima in about 1570.

The fathers Bolaños and Buenaventura initially carried out their missionary activity almost alone, but in the course of time they also

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[38] The word reduction is derived from the expression *ad ecclesiam et vitam civilem essent reducti* (Conzelmann 1958:27). McNaspy (1987:11) succinctly defines a reduction as 'a village of Indians converted to Christianity'. According to Palacios & Zoffoli (1991:123-4), the *Leyes de Indias* refer to *pueblos*. The word reduction refers more to the concentration of the Indians at the beginning and to the first 10, sometimes 20 years, during which the Indians were exempted from taxation. The term *doctrina* is applicable to the following period.

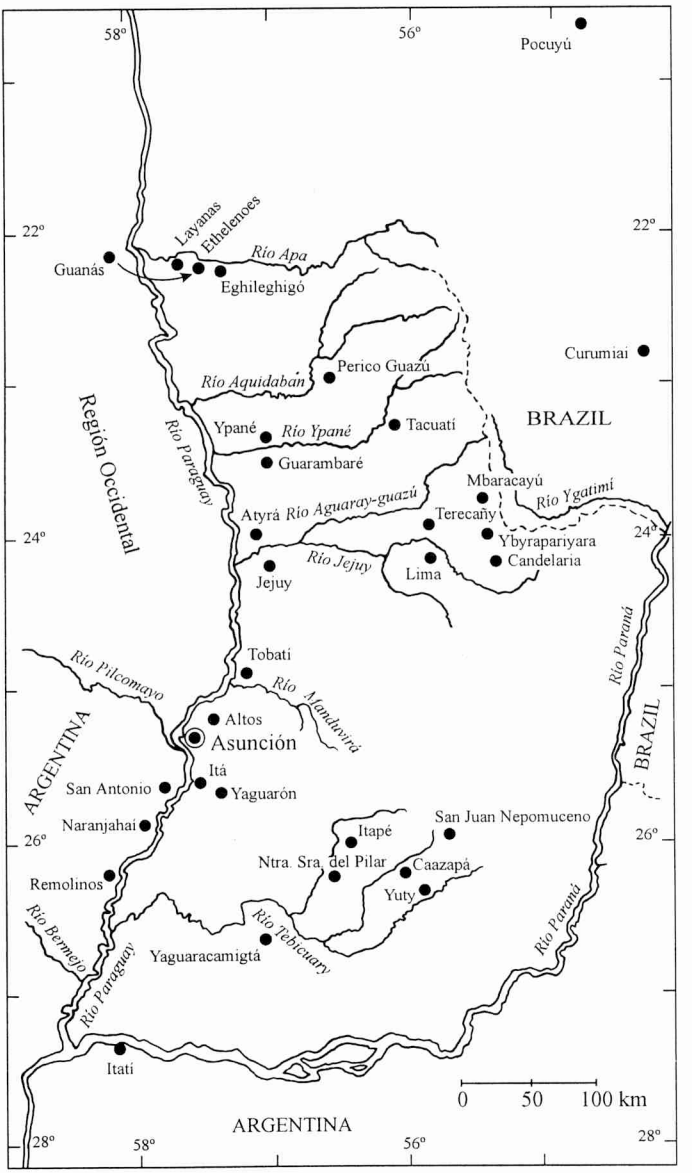

Fig. 5.2. The reductions/*pueblos de indios* established by the Franciscans in the period 1580-1797 (after Durán Estragó 1987: 302).

received support from Paraguay-born confrères like Juan de San Bernardo and Gabriel de la Anunciación.[39]

Fathers Bolaños and Buenaventura began by giving religious instruction to a number of Indian groups living within a radius of about 15 km of Asunción, at the same time increasing their own proficiency in the Guaraní language. They then journeyed up the Paraguay river to the area of the Río Ypané and the Río Jejuy, with the aim of pacifying and baptising groups of Guaraníes who were hostile towards the Spaniards for various reasons. The Spaniards had practically lost their control in the north at the end of the 1570s. The indigenous population not only refused to work for the *encomenderos*, but also attacked travellers. Even a number of Tobatines (who had hitherto been loyal to the Spaniards) began a resistance at that time. After a rising among the Indians had been suppressed in 1543, they began a new rebellion in 1579, this time under the leadership of the *cacique* Overá. The two fathers entered the Indian villages of Guarambaré and Pitum (Ypané) at the end of 1579, beginning of 1580, and laid the foundation through preaching and some baptisms for two reductions which they would later found there. Juan de Garay, who had led an expedition to the north in 1579 in order to break the resistance of the Ñuará near the left bank of the Río Paraguay, had on that occasion also penetrated farther to the east along the Río Jejuy in order to put down groups of rebelling Guaraníes (Guarambarenses). In doing so, he made the conversion work of the Franciscans which followed somewhat easier, but he had certainly not broken the resistance.[40]

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[39] Bolaños deserves credit not only for converting numerous Indians and founding several mission villages, but also for being the first Franciscan with a thorough knowledge of Guaraní and for compiling the first grammar and glossary of Guaraní between 1582 and 1585. With the help of the Creole fathers Juan de San Bernardo and Gabriel de la Anunciación, he translated the Lima catechism into this language. It was decided during the first diocesan synod of the Río de la Plata in 1603 that this catechism and no other should be used in the conversion of the Indians and that Guaraní should be used as the language at their conversion (Caballero 1978:41; Durán Estragó 1990:958; Flores G. de Zarza 1986:96). The Jesuit Ruiz de Montoya built further on Bolaños' linguistic work.

[40] Benítez 1985:99; Caballero 1978:39-41; Durán Estragó 1987:102; Molina 1954:343.

When their work had proved sufficiently successful in the first instance, the two priests returned to Asunción from the north after 1-2 years. Here they succeeded - with great difficulty - in concentrating 1,000-1,300 Indians living scattered through the *comarca* of the capital. The Indians concerned were in the service of Spaniards in Asunción and some of them had previously been initiated into the Christian faith. With them, the two fathers founded the first Franciscan reduction in 1580, less than 40 km east of Asunción. It was the still extant settlement of Altos, which was officially christened San Lorenzo de los Altos shortly after the foundation (Fig. 5.2). The site was a low, forested hill, and some of the native people were perhaps already living there. The immediate occasion for the creation of this reduction was the fact that the Indians concerned saw their fields being increasingly threatened by the expanding *estancias* and cattle ranches of the Spaniards. It is quite possible that the foundation took place with the support and on behalf of the interim governor, Juan de Garay, a great friend and protector of Bolaños and San Buenaventura. Garay had stayed in Peru in 1577-78 during the great campaign set up by the viceroy, Francisco de Toledo, for the foundation of reductions, and this may perhaps have inspired him when he tried to find a solution for the harassment which the indigenous population suffered from the Spaniards. Garay was, in any event, also the person who promulgated an *ordenanza* in 1578, requiring the Spaniards to take measures to prevent their cattle causing annoyance (see Chapter 22). Necker argues that, without the support and approval of the authorities, it would have been almost impossible for two Franciscan priests to concentrate such a large number of Indians, who had to perform services for the most influential inhabitants of Asunción, in a new settlement on their own initiative. However this may be, the location of Altos was chosen to ensure that the Indians were no longer troubled by the cattle and by overly direct contact with their owners and yet lived reasonably close to the capital in order to be able to perform their services there. Once the reduction had been firmly established, the two Franciscans entrusted the Indians to another cleric (a secular priest, since there were still very few Friars Minor in Paraguay). Even before 1600 the reduction passed permanently under the care of a secular priest. Governor Hernandarias, who was a powerful

advocate of the proper integration of the Indians into the colonial system, visited Altos in 1616 and ordered a better church, provided with a tiled roof, to be built. He also divided grazing land among the Indians for the first time in order to see whether they would breed cattle and succeed in that way in integrating further into the new society.[41]

From Altos, Fathers Bolaños and San Buenaventura again journeyed upstream to the Indians in the area between the rivers Jejuy, Ypané and Aquidabán, where there were six or seven Indian villages which had never been visited by Spaniards. At that time, there was again indigenous resistance. The missionaries continued their previously started mission work there, probably in 1582. Thanks to their activity, nine mission settlements were eventually created in this region (Fig. 5.2), i.e.[42]:

1) San Francisco de Atyrá which, according to Aguirre, was situated seven *leguas* (about 30 km) from the Jejuy;

2) Pitun (Pitum; Ypané), which was situated 12 *leguas* from Atyrá on the Río Ypané and had a population of about 1,100 in 1614;

3) Guarambaré, which was situated close to Ypané and had about 1,900 inhabitants in 1614;

4) San Andrés de Mbaracayú, which was situated on one of the tributaries of the Río Jejuy, near the Cordillera de Mbaracayú;

5) San Pedro de Terecañy, which was situated a few *leguas* farther downstream on the same river;

6) San Francisco de Ybyrapariyara, which was situated somewhat farther to the south, at a short distance from San Pedro;

7) Candelaria, which was situated close to San Francisco;

8) Perico Guazú, a reduction of Ñuarás or Ñugará, which was situated between the Aquidabán and Ypané;

9) Jejuy, which had been founded on the eponymous river near its confluence with the Río Paraguay and which had about 700 inhabitants at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

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41 Durán Estragó 1987:99-101; Molina 1954:342-3; Necker 1990:63-6.

42 The precise location of some villages varies according to the author consulted. I have adhered mainly to Durán Estragó (1987) here.

The precise foundation dates of all these reductions is not known, but they all lie between 1580 and 1600. The desired pacification was probably not achieved until after repeated attempts. The reudctions were handed over to secular priests at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Pitum and Guarambaré were the best known of these villages.

At the request of Juan de Garay, the two Franciscans also founded the reductions of Pacuyú (Pocuyú) and Curumiaí between 1582 and 1584, with the aim of calming the emotions and satisfying the pride of the Indians, who had previously unsuccessfully risen in revolt under *cacique* Overá and his son Yvyraró. The settlements were situated a long way to the north, outside modern Paraguay, on the route from el Guairá to Santiago de Jerez. They later disappeared, as did most of the other villages named, under *bandeirante* attacks.

Besides the settlements already named, la Limpia Concepción de Tobatí was another Indian village in the north. According to Aguirre (and Durán Estragó believes this to be correct), this reduction was founded in 1597 with natives of the Pirapó, Yuruquizabá and Tanimbú, but, according to Flores G. de Zarza, Bolaños founded it as early as 1583.[43]

The region of el Guairá was first visited by the two Franciscans (Armenta and Lebrón) who travelled with *adelantado* Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca from the Atlantic coast to Asunción in 1541. They carried out some mission activity there. Some other Franciscans subsequently visited the area. After their mission work in northern *Paraguay Oriental*, Fathers Bolaños and San Buenaventura also stayed in el Guairá from about 1582; they penetrated as far as the Río Iñeay. They proclaimed the faith there, performed baptisms and administered the sacrament to a large number of Guaraníes living along the rivers Piquiry and Ivaí (Huybay). They also carried out missionary work among the Spaniards in Ciudad Real and Villa Rica. Both population groups were suffering gravely from a plague epidemic at that time. When the fathers took up the cause of the

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[43] Cardozo 1967:386; Durán Estragó 1987:101-10; Flores G. de Zarza 1986: 107.

Indians in Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo who were being used as slaves in a number of small iron mines and smithies, while the women worked the *chacras*, they were forced to leave by lieutenant-governor Ruy Díaz de Melgarejo, since the mines were exploited under his personal control. The mission activity of the two Franciscans in el Guairá did not last very long, because they were recalled to Asunción in 1585 to assist in building the priory. No Franciscan reductions were founded in el Guairá, apart at least from the peripherally situated villages of Curumiaí and Pacuyú. Nevertheless, the work of the Franciscans in el Guairá was of significance. A quarter of a century later, the Jesuits would continue the mission work there.[44]

In around 1585, the two missionaries travelled to the 'province' of Caraibá, which extended 50-100 km southeast of Asunción, between the Lago de Ypo'a and the swamps near the Río Paraguay in the west and the Cerro de Acahay in the east. The Río Tebicuary formed the southern boundary. The Caraibá-Guaraníes living there were still very hostile towards the Spanish intruders at that time, as they had been from the beginning. In around 1546, they had actively participated in the general Guaraní revolt, and they had also been involved in the armed resistance of 1559-60 and 1564-68, and possibly also that of 1568-71. As far as is known, the last military confrontations dated from 1582. According to the German, Ulrico Schmidel, who took part in the punishment expedition against these Indians in about 1546, the Caraibá then possessed in their territory a *plaza fuerte* such as he had never seen before. It was provided with palisades, trenches and ambushes, enabling 20-30 men to be eliminated at one time. The village would not have fallen into Spanish hands if there had not been treachery.

Together with Juan de San Bernardo and Gabriel de la Anunciación (two mestizo novices from el Guairá), the two fathers succeeded in 1585 in concentrating about 100 Caraibás into the reduction of (San Blas de) Itá. The settlement came to be situated southeast of Asunción. Including women and children and some Indians from other groups, a total of about 500 persons was probably involved.

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[44] Durán Estragó 1987:24,52-3,110-2; Flores G. de Zarza 1986:106.

No further resistance was offered by the Caraibá from that time and the Indians performed the services required of them by the *encomenderos*. Conversion and subjection therefore also went hand in hand here. Necker regards it as almost certain that the civil authorities also intervened in this foundation. When Governor Hernandarias visited the settlement in 1616, he observed that 500 peaceful Indians were living there. The settlement was not completely new, because a village of Itá already existed there. According to Azara, it was created to accommodate Indians with whom Juan de Ayolas had done battle in 1536 and, according to Flores G. de Zarza, it was founded by Martínez de Irala as a garrison town. However this may be, the population of this settlement had greatly declined, because the Spaniards had removed Indians from there in order to use them in Asunción as permanent labour and because those who did still live there had been subjected to the *encomienda* system. The settlement of Caraibá Indians was therefore regarded as a positive development. The newly created reduction covered three square *leguas* and continued to be entrusted to the Franciscans until 1824. Itá was reported to have 1,288 inhabitants in 1659. In 1707 the place was strengthened in order to be better protected against the attacks of Chaco Indians, who crossed the river from time to time.[45]

The pacification of the Caraibá made it possible for the Franciscans to penetrate farther eastward, into the 'province' of Acahay, a region inhabited by another group of Guaraníes who resisted the Spanish conquest. In 1586-87, Fathers Bolaños and San Buenaventura founded the reduction of San Buenaventura de Yaguarón, again with support from Fray Juan de San Bernardo and Fray Gabriel de la Anunciación, who moved the Indians to their new home. The reduction was situated about 45 km from Asunción and about one *legua* from Itá. They populated the reduction with about 1,700 Acahayenses (including 500 adult males). These were natives from the province of Acahay, situated between the Cerro de Acahay and

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[45] Durán Estragó 1987:113-8; Durán Estragó 1990:963-4; Durán Estragó 1996:13; Flores G. de Zarza 1986:95,108; Molina 1954:345; Necker 1990:-67-9.

the Río Tebicuary-miní. These Guaraníes had also behaved in a warlike manner (as is shown by their participation in the resistance of the years 1559-60, 1568-71 and perhaps also 1564-68), but were nevertheless somewhat less hostile than the Caraibá. The priests succeeded in breaking their resistance. According to Necker, with the foundation of Yaguarón, the Asunceños had regained control over their Guaraní hinterland. By being concentrated close to Itá, this group of Indians had also been brought closer to the capital. In 1599 or 1600, Father Bolaños handed the settlement over to the Creole secular priest Hernando de la Cueva.[46]

At the time of the foundation of Yaguarón, there was still a shortage of priests, so that it was not possible for a father to be permanently stationed in every mission village. The missionaries stayed there only temporarily; in other words, the missionary work was peripatetic. For example, when Father Bolaños was guardian at the priory in Asunción, he periodically visited the reductions of Altos, Itá, Yaguarón and those situated farther to the north. He also tried to give some instruction to those Indians who found themselves in or near Asunción performing work for their *encomendero*. During the missionary's absence, the pastoral care for a reduction was initially entrusted to the *capataz* or *poblero* of the *encomendero* and to a lesser extent also to the principal *cacique(s)* of the village, but from the beginning of the seventeenth century it was customary for priests (*doctrineros*) to live permanently in the villages. They assumed the role of the *encomendero* and *poblero* (see also Chapter 10). It was only at that stage, therefore, that reductions were created which were led exclusively and permanently by priests. This development had been made possible by the increase in the number of priests who were prepared and able to live and work among the indigenous population. What were also important, however, were the decisions of the first diocesan synod of the Río de la Plata (1603) and the *Ordenanzas* drawn up by Governor Hernandarias to implement those decisions. It was laid down during

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[46] Durán Estragó 1987:129-32; Durán Estragó 1990:963-4; Durán Estragó 1996: 13-4; Flores G. de Zarza 1986:95,112; Necker 1990:69-70. The handsome church which Yaguarón now posseses was not built until after 1755 and is therefore not a product of the early colonial period.

the synod that the foundation of reductions (in which the Indians would receive instruction in their own language) was obligatory and that the influence of the *encomenderos* should be limited as much as possible. Governor Hernandarias lent every support to this policy. The *Ordenanzas* of Alfaro (1611-18) also prescribed reductions (see Chapter 14). When the reduction of San José de Caazapá, which was the first in the Paraná region to be led permanently by priests, was created in 1607, it soon came to be regarded as an example, which further accelerated the process of change.[47] In other words, the beginning of the seventeenth century formed a turning point in the history of the indigenous reductions in Paraguay; from that date, they fell under the control of priests, both for pastoral care and for their material functioning, at least until the mid-eighteenth century.

The Guaraníes of the Paraná region (Paranáes or Paranaenses) had also been very hostile towards the Spaniards until the beginning of the seventeenth century, especially from 1556, when the Spaniards subjected them, or at least tried to subject them, to the *encomienda* system. In 1559, they had managed to free themselves almost wholly from the *encomienda* obligations through a general revolt. The Paranaenses, in particular, who lived close to the Paraná and were experienced - and therefore very mobile - canoeists, had a very warlike reputation. Moreover, the Paranaenses were still quite numerous at the beginning of the seventeenth century: there were about 20,000 of them. They blocked roads, unexpectedly attacked the Spaniards travelling through the region and had nearly destroyed Corrientes in 1589, after which they had carried out various other attacks on the town. At the end of 1606, Father Bolaños, who had already previously travelled round the area doing missionary work and was therefore not unknown to the native people, succeeded - without the support of other missionaries or soldiers - in winning the friendship of over 40 *caciques*. This brought a peaceful end to over fifty years of resistance. Bolaños started to concentrate the Paranaenses-Tebicuaryenses and founded, together with them, the reduction of San José de Caazapá in 1607.

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[47] Durán Estragó 1990:965-6; Necker 1990:105.

He was assisted in this by a group of already more acculturated Indians from Itá, who had to serve as an example.

The jurisdiction of the future settlement had already been defined by *Merced Real* in 1603. On the west, the border was to be formed by the Río Tebicuary-mí, on the north, by the Cordillera de Yvytyruzú, on the east, by the Arroyo Capiibary and the Río Pirapó and on the south, by the Río Pirapó and the Río Tebicuary (see Fig. 5.3). In the spirit of the instructions contained in the *Leyes de Indias,* the reduction was located in the homeland of the Tebicuaryenses.[48]

Over 2,000 Indians and more than 40 *caciques* came to live in the newly created reduction. Governor Hernandarias supported the foundation and therefore sent, besides farm implements, a smithy

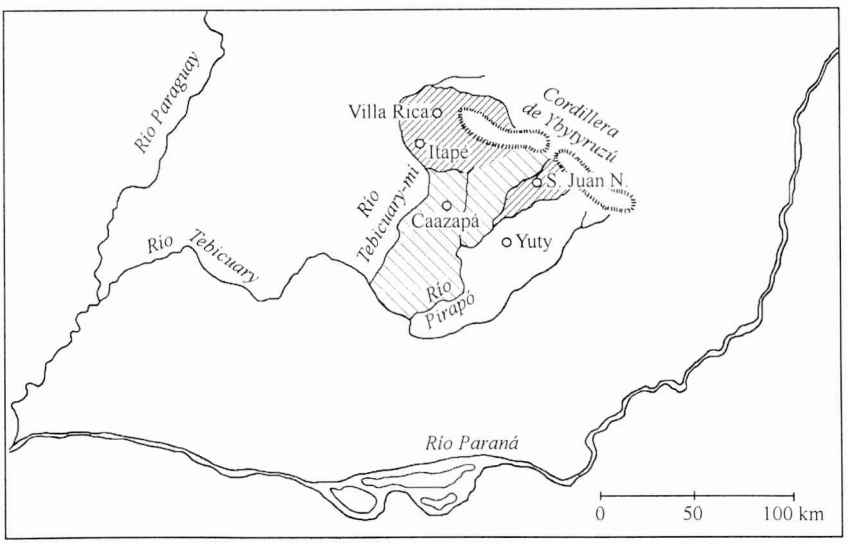

Fig. 5.3. The territory of San José de Caazapá (after Durán Estragó 1992:259-61).

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[48] The territory of the proposed reduction was so extensive that jurisdictions for Villa Rica (at its present location) and Itapé were later carved out of it. In 1784 the area was 'only' 46 by 30 *leguas*, from which the lands needed to create the reduction of San Juan Nepomuceno were further carved out in 1797 (Durán Estragó 1987:192; Durán Estragó 1992:260-1,265).

and a good number of cattle, a blacksmith and a carpenter in order to ensure as far as possible that the Indians would find it attractive to live in the reduction, would not move away, but would adopt a new way of life. Father Bolaños also tried to attract the natives with gifts (especially iron wedges) and bind them to the reduction. Once the reduction had been established, Bolaños handed it over quite soon to Gregorio de Osuna, a Franciscan born in Paraguay, who was fluent in Guaraní and governed the reduction until his death in 1641.

According to Azara, the reduction was situated at a place called Guaybirá (approximately where Itapé is today) and, according to Aguirre, it was relocated farther to the southeast, to its present location, on a stream that flows into the Tebicuary, in September 1673. At about 160 km from Asunción and an equal distance from the Alto Paraná, the reduction for a long time formed a remote outpost.

The village already had one of the best churches in the province in 1621, it soon acquired houses with tiled roofs, otherwise prospered and developed into a flourishing settlement. In 1659, it had 1,528 inhabitants, which was fewer than at the foundation and was the consequence of the intensive manner in which the Indians had been integrated by the Spaniards into the labour force. After its foundation, San José de Caazapá became the centre - the 'capital' - of the Franciscan missions, despite the fact that it was remote from Asunción and Villa Rica. The village served more or less as a model for the reductions which were later founded by the Jesuits, when they continued much of the work of the Franciscans. San José de Caazapá owed its significance mainly to its large population and rich resources. In 1682, when this settlement, too, had not escaped the economic and demographic problems facing the province of Paraguay, it still had 1,764 inhabitants. San José remained in Franciscan hands until 1808.[49]

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[49] Durán Estragó 1987:133-6,139; Durán Estragó 1990:967-8; Durán Estragó 1992:53-7,127-8; Flores G. de Zarza 1986:109,116; Molina 1954:351; Necker 1990:118-22.

Father Bolaños also laid the foundation for Yaguara Camygtá (later called San Ignacio Guazú), the first Jesuit reduction in Paraguay, in 1607-09 (see Chapter 6). It appears from an *Información* of 1618, containing a summary of the activities of the Franciscans up to that date, that, besides the abovementioned San José de Caazapá and Yuty (see below), Bolaños had founded a third reduction in the south. The aim of that reduction was to persuade a large number of rebellious Indians in the region between the Cerros de Paraguarí and the Río Tebicuary, and perhaps also south of that river and in Ñeembucú, to pursue a more peaceful existence, an undertaking that incidentally was not without its dangers. Other sources show that this third reduction was the later San Ignacio. The above implies that the Jesuit, Lorenzana (a personal friend of Bolaños) - and shortly afterwards Roque González de Santa Cruz - would in fact take over an already existing mission post in 1609. This course of events was not exceptional, because the Franciscans were so few in number that they had to hand over most of their reductions to other priests immediately after their foundation or in the course of time.[50]

Yet another reduction established by the Franciscans was Nuestra Señora de la Natividad de Yuty (also called San Francisco de Yuty in around 1650). Like San José de Caazapá and Yaguara Camygtá, it was founded to bring further peace among the Paranaenses, who were threatening the town of Corrientes and the new reductions of San José de Caazapá and Yaguara Camygtá at the end of 1610 and beginning of 1611. The Spaniards took military action against them, but Father Bolaños took on the task in June-July 1611 of concentrating the rebel Indian groups into a mission settlement and converting them to the Christian faith. According to Franciscan historians, cited by González Torres, a Yuty had already been established in 1607 at the confluence of the Río Tebicuary-mí with the Tebicuary, but this reduction survived for only a short time. Bolaños' efforts resulted in the creation of a new Yuty reduction in the period June-October 1611. According to González Torres, the

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[50] Durán Estragó 1987:154; Flores G. de Zarza 1986:101-2; Velázquez 1989:2-17.

foundation date was 4 October 1610 and the village was originally situated more to the south, along the Río Aguapey, on the site where the Jesuit mission of San Cosme would later be situated. Franciscans were reported to have already visited this area in 1607. Between 1615 and 1618, the reduction was transferred to its definitive location, which was at some distance from the Pirapó and about ten to twelve *leguas* south-southeast of San José de Caazapá. About 700 Indians settled there at the foundation and this number increased to 2-3,000 in the first decade. This reduction also enjoyed the support of Governor Hernandarias. He sent such items as iron farm implements there (incidentally fabricated in the smithies and workshops of Itá), while more acculturated Indians from Itá again offered support. When Father Bolaños left for Buenos Aires, he handed the reduction over to Father Alonso Velázquez. At that time, Yuty was an outpost in the South Paraguayan forest. Hernandarias' troops could not penetrate here until the Jesuit, Roque González de Santa Cruz, had gained the trust of *cacique* Itapúa and had founded the reduction of Encarnación (Itapúa) in 1615. In 1787, Yuty was entrusted to the care of secular priests; until then, it had been in Franciscan hands.[51]

At the end of 1615 or beginning of 1616, the reduction of Limpia Concepción de Itatí (or Yaguarí) was founded at the request of Governor Hernandarias. This *pueblo* was built on the left bank of the Paraná, i.e. on what is now Argentinean territory (Corrientes), about 10 km from the modern village of that name. Hernandarias made the request because the last rebellious Guaraní groups who had not submitted to Spanish authority were living on the banks of the Paraná. *Cacique* Cabasamby, in particular, who was a powerful shaman, was violently opposed to the Spaniards. The result was that regular military actions had to be undertaken and the Guaraní population along the Paraná had consequently greatly declined in numbers. The pacification campaigns of both the Jesuits and the Franciscans eventually put an end to this resistance. The

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[51] Caballero 1978;47; Durán Estragó 1987:155-7; Durán Estragó 1990:969-70; Flores G. de Zarza 1986:110-1; González Torres 1995:188; Molina 1954:352; Necker 1990:122-5.

Jesuits founded Itapúa and Santa Ana, and the Franciscans Itatí. Bolaños assisted with the creation of the latter reduction, but the actual grouping of the Indians and the organisation of the new settlement were the work of Father Luis Gamez. The settlement was initially populated only by local Indians, but they were later joined by Guaraníes from the reduction of Santa Ana.[52] Because of the unhealthy nature of the site, Itatí was moved in 1619 to the spot where the village is still situated. Despite the mortality which occurred among the Indians at the original location, Itatí had 891 inhabitants in 1621. From that time, the village incidentally formed part of the *gobernación* of Río de la Plata.[53] The Franciscans retained this mission until 1809, although, from 1786, they were responsible only for pastoral care and no longer for meeting the material needs of the settlement.[54]

At the time of the foundation of Itatí, Father Bolaños was already on his way to Buenos Aires and did not return again to Paraguay. He devoted the remainder of his life to the indigenous population in the environs of Buenos Aires (which was incidentally still part of the *gobernación* of Paraguay until 1621). In the jurisdiction of this town, he founded the reduction of Santiago de Baradero, with 250 Indians, in 1615/6, on a branch of the Río Paraná.[55]

Bolaños' departure put a temporary stop to the settlement foundation of the Franciscans. The Jesuits continued their work, albeit that they conducted the mission work on a larger scale, at other places and according to a more uniform pattern, based on central directives. The Franciscans resumed their foundation activities at the end of the seventeenth and in the second half of the

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52 Santa Ana was founded in the second half of 1615 by the Jesuit Roque González de Santa Cruz near the Isla de Apipé, but was transferred to the Franciscans at the request of Hernandarias.

53 In 1615 various other reductions were founded on the initiative of Hernandarias on territory that became part of the *gobernación* of Río de la Plata in 1621. See Santos Hernández 1976:128-9.

54 Durán Estragó 1990:970-1; Necker 1990:125-8.

55 Durán Estragó 1987:135,156; Flores G. de Zarza 1986:111; Oró 1991:171.

Table 5.2. The settlements founded in the province of Paraguay up to 1700 through the mediation of the Mercedarians, Dominicans and Franciscans.

Settlement name	Foundation year/period	Principal founder(s)
Mercedarians		
Areguá	after 1597	Grew gradually
Dominicans		
Tavapy	after 1593	Grew gradually
Franciscans		
Ypané (Pitún)	1579-1580 (1)	Luis Bolaños/Alonso de San Buenaventura
Guarambaré	1579-1580 (1)	idem
San Lorenzo de los Altos	1580	Luis Bolaños/Alonso de San Buenaventura
*Pocuyú (Pacuyú)	1582-84	Luis Bolaños
*Curumiaí	1582-84	Alonso de San Buenaventura
San Blas de Itá	1585	Luis Bolaños/Alonso de San Buenaventura/Juan de San Bernardo/Gabriel de la Anunciación
San Buenaventura de Yaguarón	1586	see under Itá
San Francisco de Atyrá	1580-1600 (2)	idem
*San Pedro de Terecañy	1580-1600	idem
*Candelaria	1580-1600	idem
*Perico Guazú	1580-1600(1589)	idem
*San Francisco de Ybyrapariyara	1580-1600	idem
*Jejuí	1580-1600(1589)	idem
*San Andrés de Mbaracayú	1580-1600	idem
Limpía Concepción de Tobatí	1583/97? (3)	Luis Bolaños (?)
San José de Caazapá	1607	Luis Bolaños
Yaguara Camygtá	1607-1610	Luis Bolaños
Nuestra Señora de la Natividad de Yuty	1611	Luis Bolaños
Limpia Concepción de Itatí	1615	Luis Gamez/Luis Bolaños
Santiago de Baradero	1615/6	Luis Bolaños
San Isidro de Itapé	1673/1682	Buenaventura de Villasboas

Sources: Text Chapter; Durán Estragó 1987:302; Oró 1991:171; Santos Hernández 1976:128-9.
* = destroyed. (1) relocated in 1682; (2) relocated in 1672; (3) relocated in 1699.

eighteenth century, and we will consider them again in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Drawing up the balance of their work until about 1615, it may be noted that it was the Franciscans who established the first reductions in Paraguay and so were responsible for the first more permanent Indian villages. They created a total of no fewer than 21 mission villages in the period 1580-1616 (see Table 5.2). They not only converted and 'civilised' a large number of Indians, but also effected the pacification of large areas and were, as such, an important (and also cheap) instrument of the Spanish Crown, which benefited from the further colonisation of Spanish America and the incorporation of the indigenous population. The Franciscans generally paid heed to the civil authorities and obtained their necessary support. They in fact restarted the incorporation process after 1580, after it had stalled in the second half of the sixteenth century when the Spaniards had started to behave increasingly as oppressors. This had resulted in general resistance, particularly against the obligations which the Spaniards tried to impose on the Indians through the *encomienda* system. The Spaniards had usually reacted to this with military repression, which was no real solution and led, moreover, to a fall in the indigenous population. The mission work of the Franciscans brought about a change in this situation.[56]

The Franciscans' missionary activity ensured not only law and order, civilisation and religious conversion, but also an expansion of the territory controlled by Spain. Necker observed that one could speak of an advancing pacification front, because the Franciscans did not establish new reductions in an area until the territory lying behind them had been pacified.

The Franciscans' missionary activity also benefited the *encomenderos*, because it gave them a much better control over the indigenous manpower. A positive aspect, however, is that the fathers' pacification efforts put an end to the conflicts between the Spaniards and the various Indian groups and slowed down the continuing decline of the indigenous population.

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[56] Necker 1990:57.

Besides receiving support from the authorities (especially Governor Hernandarias), the missionaries also received assistance from already more acculturated Indians, who acted as intermediaries and served as examples.

In around 1630, the Franciscans still controlled only Itá, Caazapá and Yuty; the other *pueblos de indios* of the region around Asunción and those in the north were then already in the hands of secular priests. In other words, two types of *pueblos de indios* had emerged at that time: those in the hands of the secular priests and those of the Franciscans. After 1610, a third category appeared: those which were set up and controlled by the Jesuits and which came to be called *pueblos de misiones* (Chapters 6 and 8).

Fathers Luis Bolaños and Alonso de San Buenaventura, in particular, played a remarkable role at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century by operating peacefully without arms and soldiers. Father Bolaños was involved in the creation of nearly all the villages, either as the only founder or as one of the founders (see Table 5.2), including two villages on what is now Argentinean territory.

The Franciscans owed their success mainly to the prestige and respect that they acquired among the Indians. They were seen as powerful shamans, against whom most of the local *hechiceros* proved to be unequal. Bolaños had the most authority; he was the *hechicero de Dios*.[57] Their knowledge of the indigenous language also operated in their favour and the same is true of the generous manner in which they supplied the Indians with gifts (especially iron objects and cotton materials), while they themselves lived simply. The situation was a reciprocal one, furthered, in particular, by the communal production system that had been set up in the villages. Moreover, the reductions enabled the Indians to become acquainted with new plants, animals, production techniques etc., and offered them better protection against the excesses of the colonial system, which added a further element of attraction.

As we have seen, not all of the villages which the Franciscans established were completely new. Many reductions were founded at

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[57] Durán Estragó 1987:97.

a place where there was already a permanent or temporary concentration of Indians (*tava*) which may or may not have been created there through the intervention of the Spaniards (including Governor Martínez de Irala and various *encomenderos*). The village of Jejuy, for example, had already been established by Juan de Garay in 1589 on the north bank of the Río Jejuy in the territory of the Guaraníes Curupayti; this same Garay also subsequently founded the village of Perico Guazú on the Río Ypané, at 23°19' S.[58] In such instances, the villages retained their original names, often with the addition of the name of a saint (e.g. San Francisco de Atyrá, San Pedro de Terecañy). The villages then also largely retained their original appearance, albeit that a small church was erected at the heart of the settlement, in the middle of a square, surrounded by the houses of the native population. When totally new settlements were built, these were based - like the old ones - as far as possible on kinship.

In conclusion

The period up to 1537 was characterised by reconnaissances aimed at finding a suitable route to the mysterious 'Sierra de la Plata' and by the foundation of a number of (temporary) support points to assist in the explorations. The foundation of Asunción in 1537 did not signal the immediate end of the reconnaissances, because it was not until the end of the 1540s that the attempts to find a usable route to Alto Perú from the Río Paraguay were halted. The foundation did mean, however, that attention quite soon began to be directed to Paraguay itself.

The period of the *conquista* ended in about 1550 and colonisation began to gain impetus. The period from 1554-93 was a time in which a considerable number of Spanish settlements, dispersed over an enormous area, were founded on the initiative of the authorities in Asunción. The principal aim was to occupy and control the area to prevent it from falling into Portuguese hands. The authorities

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[58] González Torres 1995:48.

also wished to have support points along the route to the coast and - to a lesser extent - along that to Alto Perú. Another series of foundations was aimed at getting the indigenous population better under control to enable them to be used as manpower. This was achieved mainly with the assistance of the Franciscans, who created 20 *pueblos de indios* in the period 1580-1615.

6

The activities of the Jesuits, 1610-85

The seventeenth century differed completely from the sixteenth century as far as colonisation and settlement were concerned. The picture was then largely determined by the extensive missionary activities undertaken by the Jesuits and by the attacks of the Portuguese. These attacks led both to the spatial concentration of the mission activity and to a marked contraction of the territory occupied by the Spanish population. Various Spanish settlements had to be abandoned and others moved. Very few new settlements were founded. In this chapter, we will first consider the settlement foundation activities of the Jesuits, while the following chapter will examine how the Spanish population fared outside the mission areas.

The arrival and task of the Jesuits

In Chapter 5 we saw that the Franciscans created the first reductions in Paraguay. They did that mainly in areas which the Spaniards found it difficult to get under control, because the Indians resisted the obligations which the Spaniards tried to impose on them under the *encomienda* regime. The Jesuits (who had established their first house in Córdoba in 1586) also started to found mission settlements at the beginning of the seventeenth century and would continue to be in charge of some dozens of villages established by

them until 1768.[1] They continued the work of the Franciscans in many respects and, in so doing, left an indelible mark on the settlement pattern. They undertook their activities mainly among the Guaraníes living on the periphery of the then colony, who had as yet scarcely come under Spanish authority, regarded the incipient Spanish penetration into their territory with mistrust, and had only partly been brought under the *encomienda* system. Unlike the Franciscans, the Jesuits were fervently opposed to the performance of personal services for the Spaniards (*encomienda de servicios personales*), which had led to many abuses in the sixteenth century. Another important difference was that, in the course of time, they received considerable privileges for their mission villages from the Spanish Crown. Their *pueblos de misiones* were among the most flourishing settlements of the provinces of Paraguay and Río de la Plata in the seventeenth, but still more in the eighteenth century.[2] The activities of the Jesuits were on a larger scale than those of the Franciscans while, in the course of time, they also worked increasingly according to a set pattern.

The first Jesuits to arrive in Paraguay at the invitation of the Bishop of Asunción were the Fathers Juan Saloni (a Catalan), Thomas Fields (an Irishman from Limerick) and Manuel Ortega (a Portuguese). They arrived in Asunción from Brazil, via Córdoba del Tucumán, on 11 August 1588, and were festively received there. They then already spoke Tupí, a language related to Guaraní. Saloni remained in Asunción, but Ortega and Fields travelled to el Guairá in 1589 to carry out mission work for about ten years among the Guaraníes living there, journeying on foot through swamps and forests. They were well received and later declared that they had seen some 200,000 Guaraníes, who appeared to be

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1 For the work of the Jesuits in Paraguay, see the various general works referred to in the index to the Bibliography.

2 This chapter deals only with the foundation of settlements. In order to give a rounded and balanced picture of the Jesuits' work of settlement foundation, I do not limit myself to the missions which were founded in what is now Paraguay, but also briefly discuss the foundations that were carried out in areas that later became part of Argentina and Brazil and were part of the Jesuits' mission province of Paraguay. In later chapters, I will sketch a picture of various other aspects of the Jesuits' missionary work.

eligible in every respect for conversion to the Christian faith. They probably baptised several tens of thousands of Indians, to whom they gave Christian names.[3] In 1590 and 1593 eight more Jesuits came to Paraguay, but they did not engage in mission work among the Indians. The Jesuits' mission work at that time was comparable with the peripatetic mission which the Franciscans Bolaños and Buenaventura had practised for a number of years. The Jesuits had not yet founded any mission villages and, in around 1599, even the peripatetic pastoral care was stopped. In 1602, the superior of the Jesuit province of Peru (of which Paraguay formed a part) decided to halt the work of the Order which had been started in Paraguay by way of an experiment, because of a shortage of priests, and to concentrate the Jesuits in Cordóba. Fields remained behind in Paraguay as the only member of the Order.

The civil and ecclesiastical authorities In Paraguay were not very happy with this course of events. The Franciscan bishop Martín Ignacio de Loyola (a grandson of a brother or sister of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order) therefore appealed at the beginning of the seventeenth century to the Father General of the Jesuits at Rome, Father Claudio Acquaviva, who decided on 9 February 1604 to split off Tucumán and (the then still very large) Paraguay from the mission province of Peru and to create a separate mission province from them. He appointed Father Diego de Torres Bollo, who arrived in Paraguay in June 1607, as provincial superior of the new mission province of Paraguay.[4] He was accompanied by 13 colleagues (three of whom still had to complete their studies in Santiago de Chile) to assist him in the performance of his work. They started to further organise the new mission province. Some of them started working in Paraguay, where the Order had owned a *residencia* since 1588; the others went to the houses in Córdoba and Santiago del Estero. More Jesuits subsequently soon arrived, as a result of which, 113 fathers and brothers were already

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[3] Meliá Lliteras 1991:213.

[4] For a list of all the provincial superiors and the superiors of the Guaraní missions in the period 1609-1768, see Blumers 1992:131-4.

active throughout the mission province in 1614, partly among the Indians and partly in the Spanish settlements.[5]

The newly created mission province initially comprised the whole of southern Spanish America: present-day Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, as well as southern Brazil and Chile. The latter area and the Argentine province of Cuyo were separated off in 1625, but the Jesuit province then nevertheless still extended from the Andes to the Atlantic Ocean.[6] It comprised the whole of the la Plata region, where mission activities were undertaken between the 23rd and 32nd parallels of latitude (Fig. 6.2 and 8.1). The province contained highly diverse physical geographical regions, ranging from subtropical forest areas, which were suitable for arable farming, to *campos* and *pampas*, on which stockbreeding could be practised. Generally speaking, the region possessed a favourable production climate and fertile soils. Nevertheless, it formed one of the peripheral regions within Spanish America.[7]

What was important for the kind of activity undertaken in Paraguay was that the provincial superior, Torres Bollo, possessed extensive mission experience in Peru and, more in particular, in the Jesuit reduction of Julí on Lake Titicaca, which he had led for seven years.[8] This experience had persuaded him that special, permanent settlements were necessary for the mission work to really succeed; baptism by peripatetic missionaries (like Ortega and Fields) would never lead to solid and lasting Christian communities, certainly not if the missionaries had to operate among nomadic or semi-sedentary Indian groups. Moreover, experience in Peru had taught that the mission settlements should be situated at some distance, and more or less isolated, from the Spanish towns and villages and should be populated exclusively by Indians. Only then would the freedom of the Indians be sufficiently guaranteed and

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5 Cardozo 1967:65-6; Kahle 1992:26; Lacombe 1955:298; Lugon 1970:23; McNaspy 1987:19; Maeder 1996a:187; Nickson 1993:223; Rouillon Arróspide 1997:32-3; Santos Hernández 1992:176,180.

6 Palacios & Zoffoli 1991:57-8; Blumers (1992:21) refers to 1626.

7 Conzelmann 1958:13-4; Meier 1990:63; Santos Hernández 1992:174.

8 Wentner 1989:12; For details of this Peruvian mission settlement, see Lacombe 1998:83-91 and Palacios & Zoffoli 1991:49-55.

only then would they not be continually confronted with the often not very exemplary conduct of the Spaniards. Torres Bollo further revealed himself to be a fervent opponent of the *servicios personales* which the Spaniards demanded of the Indians and accordingly of the *encomienda* system.

The Jesuits' view that the Indians must live in their own villages was by no means new. In as early as 1503, the Spanish Crown considered it necessary that the indigenous population of Spanish America should not live dispersed or wander freely about, but should be concentrated in special, larger villages for their salvation and protection. Extensive legislation had come into being (summarised in 1573 in the *Ordenanzas de Descubrimiento y Población*) and the law had already been put into practice in several places. The viceroy, Toledo, had been responsible from 1570 for the creation of numerous reductions in Peru and, as we have described, the Franciscans had created 20 *pueblos de indios* in Paraguay after 1575.[9] The Jesuits' arguments for the foundation of special settlements were partly of a different kind, however, from those of the Franciscans and civil authorities of the preceding decades. With the latter, apart from practical mission considerations, it was mainly the need to break the resistance of rebellious Indian groups and the wish to incorporate them into the colonial system that counted. It had not been their aim to isolate the Indians more or less completely from the Spanish society. Nor were the Franciscans radically opposed to the *encomienda* system.[10] They did not oppose the wish of the Spaniards to concentrate the Indians in order to control

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9 Meliá Lliteras 1978:158.

10 The *pueblos de indios* were inhabited by Indians who had their own administration, but were controlled by the Spaniards. The Indians were in contact with the Spaniards through the *encomienda* system. The villages had been founded by the Franciscans. They were relatively open settlements, which meant that abuses could more easily occur. The *pueblos de misiones* were controlled by Jesuits who enjoyed a large measure of autonomy. Nearly all the Indians living in them were exempted from performing personal services for the Spaniards. These villages were much more isolated and protected (Palacios & Zoffoli 1991:124). In this study I use both terms in the sense given here, but this is not always done consistently in the consulted sources.

them better and to use their labour. The Jesuits, on the other hand, wished precisely to prevent that.

The mission work in Julí had provided experience in the organisation and laying out of the villages and had also taught how important it was not to use Spanish, but the Indians' own language in the missionary work. The conclusion was incidentally also drawn during the diocesan synod that was held in 1603 that special reductions should be created and that the missionary work should be carried out there in Guaraní, as it was in the reductions founded by the Franciscans.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the colony of Paraguay still contained large areas which had not yet been brought effectively under the authority of Spain. The Guaraníes and other Indian groups still lived largely free in their *selvas* and *campos*, although some had already experienced the threat of colonial domination. The attempts to incorporate them into the colonial system by military force had so far met with little success. Governor Hernandarias had therefore informed the Spanish king at the beginning of the seventeenth century that it would not be easy, or perhaps even possible, to subject all the Indian groups effectively to Spanish rule. In reply, King Philip III had informed the Governor by *Cédula Real,* dated 15 July 1608, that the Indians of el Guairá and other peripheral regions should be integrated into the Spanish colonial society not by military force, but by peaceful means - through missionary work - and that he had the Jesuits in mind for this missionary task. In other words, the fathers were expected to develop their activities mainly on the *fronteras* of Spanish Paraguay.[11]

In the latter part of 1609, the possibilities for missionary work in Paraguay were specifically discussed by Father Superior Torres Bollo, Governor Hernandarias and the Dominican, Reginaldo de Lizárraga (who was then bishop of Asunción). The conclusion of the deliberations was that the Jesuits would try to initiate their work on three fronts at the same time: in the zone immediately west of

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[11] Lugon 1970:24; Meliá Lliteras 1991:217; Palacios & Zoffoli 1991:59; Plá 1963:134.

Asunción (the territory of the Guaycurúes), in el Guairá and in the middle Paraná region. The Franciscans had undertaken very few activities in these areas and so incorporation was the least advanced there. The choice of these areas was partly inspired by strategic considerations. In el Guairá the mission villages might become good links in the communications between the Atlantic Ocean and Asunción, as well as with the Andes region (as would the missions which the fathers later founded in el Itatín). The missions might also be able to prevent the Portuguese from advancing farther westward - and ultimately even perhaps to Alto Perú. In the Paraná region, mission settlements might be able to prevent the advance of the Portuguese towards la Plata, while missions to the west of Asunción might reduce the danger from attacks by Chaco Indians.

Father Torres Bollo insisted explicitly in these negotiations that the Indians who were to be concentrated in the reductions should be exempted from *encomienda* obligations and therefore also from performing personal services. The missionaries had to be able to assure them when making contact that they would not be used as labour by the Spaniards. The fathers appointed as *doctrineros* in the proposed mission villages would be maintained by the province. The arrangements were approved by King Philip III.[12]

Governor Hernandarias and others hoped that the newly arrived Jesuits would not only give the missionary work among the Indians a strong impulse, but that they would also provide secondary education on a wide scale from their *Colegio* in Asunción. It would soon appear, however, that they would not truly devote themselves to education in Paraguay, but regarded the missionary work as their principal activity.

In as early as the second half of November 1609, two Jesuits were appointed to each of the three mission areas referred to above. They soon afterwards journeyed to their areas of work and started to concentrate the Indians in settlements, including new ones where necessary. They began to instruct them in the Christian faith in

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[12] Alegre 1986:65; Arango Vieira 1941:319; McNaspy 1987:61; Palacios & Zoffoli 1991:225,233; Santos Hernández 1992:276.

Guaraní and tried to familiarise them with useful elements of European civilisation.

The attempts to carry out missionary work in the Chaco

The Jesuits Vicente Griffi (an Italian) and Roque González de Santa Cruz (a mestizo from Asunción) were sent to the Chaco. They founded the mission village of Yasoca opposite Asunción, at one *legua's* distance, in 1610.[13] The settlement did not long survive, because the missionary work came to an end in 1612. Roque González de Santa Cruz had then already departed for the area south of the Río Tebicuary. A fresh attempt was made in 1613 by the Fathers Romero and Moranta, who established the reduction of Santa María de los Reyes. This was not successful either. In 1626, a third attempt was undertaken, again by Father Romero, but again without a positive result. The nomadic Guaycurúes, who lived solely from hunting, fishing, gathering and robbery, proved to be neither prepared nor able to give up their free and traditional way of life and therefore quite quickly left the settlement again into which they had been brought. Velázquez noted that the fact that Roque González de Santa Cruz was a mestizo from the territory of the Guaraníes also did not work directly in his favour, since the Guaraníes were archenemies of the Guaycurúes. The fathers decided to halt the missionary work in the Chaco in 1626. They gave among their reasons the fact that epidemic diseases, the ungrateful and recalcitrant attitude of the Indians and their fear of being baptised made their work impossible but, according to Saeger, it was by no means unlikely that they took the view that the Order's still scarce manpower could be better used in areas where better results could be achieved.

After the attempts to carry out missionary work had been halted, the Guaycurúes, as before, sometimes behaved aggressively towards the Spaniards and sometimes in a more obliging manner, if that

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[13] According to González Torres (1995:168,185), also Azocá, Casocá, Jasocá, Jasoká or Caichoca.

proved to be to their advantage. The few attempts which were undertaken later in the seventeenth century also always ended without a lasting result. This meant that the Jesuits were unable to change the settlement picture of the Chaco in the seventeenth century and that they were unable to create peaceful relations with the peoples on the western border.[14] It was not until over a century later that the Jesuits resumed their missionary work in the Chaco. At that time, two very capable German-speaking Jesuits were engaged: the Bohemian Father Martin Dobrizhoffer and the Silesian Florián Paucke (usually called Baucke). I shall return to this in Chapter 8.

The settlement foundation activities in el Guairá[15]

The mission work in el Guairá was entrusted by Provincial Superior Torres to the Italian Fathers José Castaldini (Cataldino) and Simón Masseta (Maceta). They would be assisted by the Creole priest Rodrigo Ortiz de Melgarejo.

As we stated in the last chapter, the forested region between the Alto Paraná in the west, the Yguazú in the south, the Paranapanema in the north and the Itararé in the east[16], contained, according to Ruy Díaz de Guzmán, an indigenous population of some 200,000 souls. Even if this figure is somewhat on the high side, el Guairá was nevertheless a densely populated Guaraní territory[17]; it even perhaps contained more Indians than the area near Asunción, where

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[14] Alegre 1986:66; Meier 1990:63; Saeger 1989:58; Santos Hernández 1976:129-32; Santos Hernández 1992:276; Susnik 1987:91; Velázquez 1975:27.

[15] For the Jesuits' missionary activity in el Guairá, see especially the publications by Jaeger (1957), Amable (1986: especially 69-76) and Groh (1970: especially 504-10). The latter publication is also a biography of Antonio Ruiz de Montoya. See further: Benítez 1985:102; Cardozo 1991:118-20; Kohlhepp 1973-74:53-5,61; Lacombe 1955:298-301; Lugon 1970:21 *et seq.*; Rouillon Arróspide 1997:176-97 and Santos Hernández 1976:133-4.

[16] González Torres 1995:50.

[17] Meliá Lliteras 1988:62. Ruez (1953:564) states (following Ruy Díaz de Guzmán) that el Guairá had (besides sixty Spanish families) 40,000 *fuegos de indios* (indigenous hearths) in 1603 and equates this with a population of about 150,000 persons.

the Cario-Guaraníes had allied themselves with the Spaniards. The Franciscans (particularly Luis Bolaños and Alonso de San Buenaventura) had already performed the necessary missionary work among the latter Indian group. In el Guairá, however, the mission field was still largely unreclaimed, although the two Franciscans and the Jesuits Ortega and Fields had already performed important, peripatetic preparatory work there. They had not yet, however, founded any special mission settlements there.[18]

The two fathers left for the region on 8 December 1609. On their departure, they obtained permission from the governor and the bishop to concentrate the converted Indians in special settlements, to govern them away from any town or fort, to build churches in the villages and to oppose in the name of the king anyone wanting to subject the new Christians to personal servitude. The missionaries were given detailed instructions by the Provincial Superior Torres on how they were to set about their work. These instructions were partly based on the experiences in Julí.[19]

The reductions to be founded in el Guairá had - so it follows from his instructions - primarily to serve the interests of the Indians: they had to acquire knowledge of, and be converted to, the true Christian faith, be protected from the aggression of Portuguese slave hunters and exploitation by Spanish *encomenderos*, adopt a more sedentary existence and become more practised in agriculture and artisan skills. They had, in other words, through exemption from *encomienda* labour and conversion to the Christian faith, to be protected against both physical and spiritual slavery or freed from them. The idea of the civil authorities was that the mission posts had to accelerate pacification, become strategically important

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[18] Fassbinder 1926:23.

[19] See Rabuske (1978) for the two instructions which Father Diego de Torres Bollo gave to the Jesuits in el Guairá and the Paraná region in 1609-10. The instructions contain many indications about the manner in which spiritual care was to be approached and the faith proclaimed, but they also contain practical advice, including some about the choice of location of the villages. Rabuske and various other Argentinean Jesuits believe that the instructions constituted a manual for all the Jesuit missions in Paraguay at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The instructions are also to be found in Palacios & Zoffoli 1991:38 *et seq.*

support points on the route between Asunción and the Atlantic coast, and counteract the Portuguese pressure for expansion. The Jesuits' missionary work would perhaps even make it possible for the Spanish colonisation front to push forward into Santa Catarina.

In September 1610, Maceta and Cataldino founded the first reduction, on the Río Paranapané (now the Paranapanema), close to the mouth of the Río Pirapó. This was the area ruled by the *cacique* Miguel Atiguayë (Aticaya) (Fig. 6.1; Table 6.1). They called the village Nuestra Señora de Loreto del Pirapó and concentrated some 200 Indian families there, who had already been baptised earlier by Ortega and Fields. The reduction rapidly became overpopulated, so that the fathers, at the suggestion of *cacique* Aticaya, proceeded to found a second settlement in that same year. It was originally called San Ignacio de Ytaumbuzú, but later simply San Ignacio (Miní). This second settlement was also situated on the left bank of the Paranapanema, about three *leguas* upstream (i.e. eastward) from Loreto, or a day's journey from there by rowing boat. San Ignacio became the most populous of all the reductions founded by the Jesuits in el Guairá up to 1631. On 31 July 1612 (the official foundation date) 700 households (about 3,000-3,500 persons) had already settled there and, eventually, about 6,000 Indians came to live there.[20] San Ignacio and Loreto probably also absorbed the inhabitants of two small villages situated on the opposite bank of the river, called Roquillo and Tamarca. The reason for this was that the fathers then no longer had to keep crossing the river to reach the inhabitants, while the merging also made possible the creation of larger settlements. In any event, there is no further mention of the two villages after 1614.

The fields around the two settlements produced a variety of crops; besides food crops such as maize and manioc, such things as cotton, sugar cane and grapes were grown. The Indians developed a trade in textiles and also supplied needy people who visited them with clothing. The reductions also raised various kinds of small and large livestock which, in Nuestra Señora de Loreto, were kept for practical reasons on the island formed by the rivers Paranapané and

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[20] Amable 1986:71; Meliá Lliteras 1988:74.

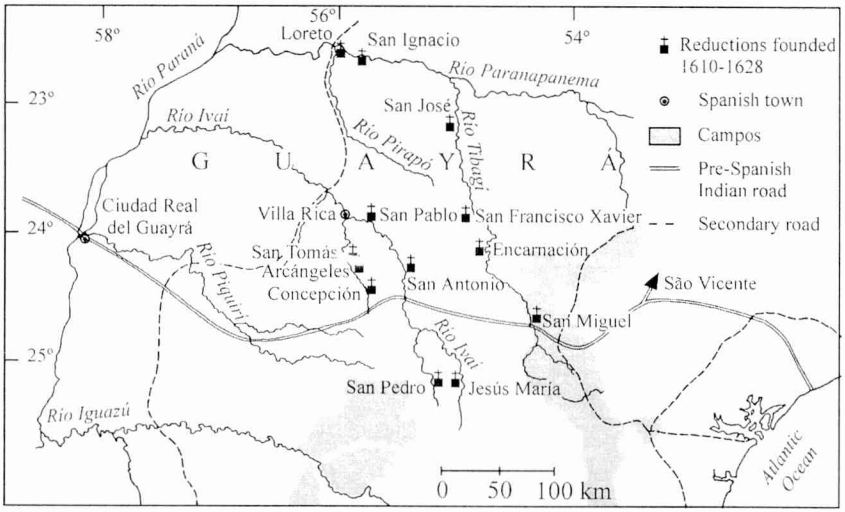

Fig. 6.1. The Jesuit reductions founded in el Guairá, 1610-28 (After Kohlhepp 1973-4: 57; cf. Hernández 1913/I:9).

Pirapó. In 1612 the two reductions (including the two small villages) already had a combined population of about 6,000 and, in 1620, of about 8,000 souls. By 1620 they had grown into successful mission villages. At that time, there were schools where hundreds of pupils received religious instruction and also learned a little reading and writing. The dwellings were described as comfortable and elegant and the churches of the two villages were the handsomest of the whole of Paraguay. Governor Luis de Céspedes García Xería - who was certainly no friend of the Jesuits - declared he had seen none better. The Indians of the two reductions did, however, have to perform work for *encomenderos* in Ciudad Real for two months in the year, because this obligation had already been imposed on them before the fathers began their missionary work in the region.

At first, all the missionary work fell on Cataldino and Masseta, but in 1612 they received support from two other missionaries: Martín Javier Urtasun (Urtazun) (from Navarre) and Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (a *Limeño*). Urtasun died in 1614 at the age of 26, but Ruiz de Montoya remained in el Guairá for two decades and turned

out to be someone with exceptional missionary and spiritual qualities, making him the region's most valuable missionary.[21]

The success of Loreto and San Ignacio, the arrival of the two new missionaries, the fact that the two existing villages were becoming increasingly congested, the tendency of the Spaniards to exploit the Indians in el Guairá and Portuguese aggression, led the Order to start founding new *pueblos de misiones* at the beginning of the 1620s. The *Ordenanzas* of Alfaro of 1611/18 encouraged them in this (see Chapter 14). In a short time, no fewer than 11 new reductions were founded. The result was that there was a total of 13 mission settlements in el Guairá at the end of 1628 (Fig. 6.1).[22] Each of them was larger than the traditional indigenous *tavas* of one or more multifamily houses. According to Meliá Lliteras, the vast majority of the Guaraníes of the region had been brought together in these 13 villages, but not all, because then, too, there were still small hamlets in the forests inhabited by 'heathen'.[23] The principal founder of the new villages was Father Antonio Ruiz de Montoya.

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21 A description of the life and work of this in Lima-born Jesuit is to be found in the article by Groh (1970) and the book by Rouillon Arróspide (1997). Ruiz de Montoya arrived in Paraguay in 1610 and was active as a missionary in el Guairá for many years. He was also mission superior there from 1622 to 1634 and performed that function for the Paraná missions in 1636-7. In 1639, he wrote his *Conquista espíritual*, an eyewitness history of the reductions in el Guairá from their foundation until their demise (edited by Maeder in 1996). He compiled a vocabulary and grammar of the Guaraní language that became a classic. He also wrote an elementary catechism, which Father Díaz Taño subsequently elaborated (Rouillon Arróspide 1997:182). For various other activities, see the main text.

22 Jaeger (1957:118-9) remarked that the sources also mention certain other missions besides the 13 ones named, but that these were perhaps villages which did not resort under the direct administration of the superior in el Guairá, or were often not mentioned because they were served by missionaries from the Misiones region in the south. The most important were Santa María del Yguazú and Santiago de los Gualachos. The first settlement was founded in 1626 by the Fathers Diego de Boroa and Claudio Ruyer, after a few previous failed attempts. The village was reported to have already housed 600 families in 1627 after an existence of eight months. The second reduction was situated four days' journey south from Arcángeles, in the territory of the Gualachos, who spoke a different language from the Guaireños. This reduction arose through the efforts of Father Ruiz de Montoya.

23 Meliá Lliteras 1991:219.

The first new settlement in the 1620s was created after the fathers had obtained permission in an *oficio* dated 8 August 1622 to enter the province of Taiaoba. Father Ruiz de Montoya handed the villages of Loreto and San Ignacio over to other, freshly arrived, colleagues and himself set out into the wilderness with two others. Braving many dangers and with a good deal of luck, he succeeded in founding the reduction of **San Francisco Javier (Xavier)** in the *comarca* of Tayatí or Ibitirimbetá in the latter part of 1622. The first location of this village proved not to be well chosen and so the settlement was soon moved to a higher, clearly visible site, where water and firewood were present and where the soil appeared to be very suitable for arable farming, including viticulture. The village grew rapidly from that time and was soon populated by 1,500 families of Christian Indians. There was even talk of splitting the village, but the political situation of the early 1630s (see below) prevented this.

In 1625, the reduction of **San José** was founded by Ruiz de Montoya in the region of Tucutí, partly with the intention of obtaining a mooring site along the Río Tibagí, halfway between San Ignacio and San Francisco Javier, on the upper course of this hazardous river. Father Masseta took charge of the undertaking. The reduction made so little progress at first that the missionaries considered abandoning it, but the development did eventually take off.

On 10 August 1625, the feast of St. Lawrence (San Lorenzo), a third new settlement was founded: **Encarnación**. The site proved to be not wholly well chosen and so the settlement was moved to a more suitable site in 1627, at two days' journey from San Javier. This was situated in the province or *comarca* of Nuatinguí and in the domain of *cacique* Pindó. The settlement grew rapidly on its new site, which was in a fertile area. More than 500 families moved there and the number was expected to grow to 800, although this did not actually happen.

In 1626, Fathers Ruiz de Montoya and Mendoza founded **San Miguel** in Ibitiruzú (Ibitiriuna, Ibianguí), the territory of the Coronados Indians, close to the Serranía Ibitirussú or Ybian-guy and not far from the sources of the Tibagí.

The foundation of **Los Siete Arcángeles** or Ángeles de Taioba must have already been started at the end of 1625, but the definitive foundation did not take place until 7 August 1627 after two failed attempts. The village was situated in the territory of Tayaoba, one of the most powerful *caciques* of el Guairá. The district was inhabited by warlike Indians, who were also still cannibals and, therefore, the terror of the Spaniards. The settlement was founded after that of San Pablo and was situated at two days' journey from that village, at least over land; by river, the journey took six to eight days. The settlement was situated

on the right bank of the upper Corumbataí, a tributary of the Ivaí, and over 300 Indians were concentrated there at first.

At the beginning of 1627, Father Ruiz de Montoya founded **San Pablo de Iñeay** (or Iniay), between Tayatí and Tayaoba, for Tayaoba Indians. He subsequently transferred the mission to his colleague Maceta. In its first year, this mission already accommodated about 400 Indian families. The village was situated on the right bank of the Río Ivay, close to the Río Iñeay. In 1627, the indefatigable Ruiz de Montoya also founded **San Antonio** in the *comarca* of Ibiticoy, where Camperos Indians were concentrated. In the same year, Fathers Ruiz de Montoya and Díaz Taño began to establish the reduction of **Concepción de los Gualachos**, also called Concepción de Nuestra Señora de los Guañanos. This settlement was situated in the *comarca* of los Gualachos (Gualacos, Guayanás), farther to the south, in the district ruled by *cacique* Co-ën. On the initiative of Superior Ruiz de Montoya, the reduction of **San Pedro** was also founded in the *comarca* of Concepción in the same year.

The series of foundations was terminated in 1628 with the foundation of San(to) Tomás and Jesús María. **San(to) Tomás** (or Tomé) was established in Tayaoba by Ruiz de Montoya at about five kilometres from the reduction of Siete Arcángeles, but was separated from it by the river. According to other sources, the settlement was founded not by Ruiz de Montoya, but by Francisco Díaz Taño, close to the Corumbataí. **Jesús María** was founded on the orders of Superior Ruiz de Montoya in the *sierras* where the powerful and greatly feared *cacique* Guiravera (Guiraverá) held sway. In 1629, he fell into the hands of the Mamelukes (Portuguese mestizoes) together with many other Indians, but Fathers Masseta and Mansilla managed to secure the release of a number of them, including the *cacique*, who then converted and supported the missionary work. The reduction was situated in the territory of the Tayobas, about 2.5-3 *leguas* from Los Siete Arcángeles. It was soon the home to about 5,000 Indians. El Guairá was already in a serious crisis when Jesús María was founded, as a result of the attacks of the Portuguese *bandeirantes*.[24]

Each of the 13 settlements described above was populated immediately or after some time by a good number of newly baptised Indi-

[24] The foregoing details are largely derived from Jaeger (1957). Rouillon Arróspide (1997:178), basing himself on Hernández (1913,I:10), gives somewhat different information for a number of villages.

ans, as appears from some of the figures given above. Some of the settlements were situated on the Paranapanema and Ivaí, two tributaries of the Paraná, others were located on the subsidiary rivers Tibagí and Corumbataí.[25] All these rivers were navigable by canoes, *balsas* and rowing boats, which facilitated communication between the communities, but the rivers could also flood and form a source of malaria. As appears from Fig. 6.1, San José, San Francisco Javier, Encarnación and (farther to the southeast, in the border zone between the forest and open grassland) San Miguel, were situated on the Río Tibagí. San Pablo and San Antonio were founded on the middle reaches of the Rio Ivaí (more in the vicinity of Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo). Jesús María arose on the upper course of that river, with San Pedro close by. Santo Tomás, Arcángeles and Concepción were established on the Corumbataí. The reductions were partly created by the transformation of existing Indian *aldeas*, while others were completely new villages, but all the settlements were considerably larger than the traditional *tavas*.

Meliá Lliteras states that, according to a well documented calculation, ultimately no fewer than 42,000 Indians came to live in the 13 reductions. They were largely Guayraenses, but also comprised Caríos and Tupí, who had fled from the bordering areas to the west and east, respectively. Loreto became by far the most important reduction; the village housed about 2,000 families in 1628, giving a total of 12,000 people. According to Jaeger, however, Father Ruiz de Montoya wrote in his *Conquista espíritual* that 94,990 souls were recorded up to 1626 in the books which he was able to rescue at the exodus (see below). Some authors therefore assume that more than 100,000 Indians were living in the combined mission villages in around 1631. Meliá Lliteras gives the abovementioned figure of about 42,000 and adds that Indians who had not been brought into reductions also lived in the territory of the Jesuits, so that - at a

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[25] The sources differ about the location of some villages; compare, for example, Kohlhepp's map with that in Carbonell de Masy (1992:71). In Fig. 6.1, I have adhered to the locations from the publication by Kohlhepp (1973-74:57), but followed Jaeger more in the text, which explains some of the discrepancies between text and map. Kohlhepp (p. 60) also points out that the location of some villages is uncertain.

cautious estimate - the total indigenous population of the mission area may be put at about 50,000 in 1630.[26] Whatever the true figure, the population of the Spanish towns of Ciudad Real, Villa Rica and Santiago de Jerez was very small in comparison: somewhat more than 1,000.[27]

The majority of the mission villages were still very new at the beginning of the 1630s and would therefore still have consisted of dwellings and buildings constructed of wood, reeds, mud, palm leaves etc. The two oldest settlements, however, already had handsome churches, even according to Governor Céspedes. The villages were able to provide for their own needs. The settlements of Ciudad Real del Guairá and Villa Rica had fewer charms. According to Governor Céspedes, they were little more than *cortijos*.

The depopulation of el Guairá

While the Jesuits made various vain attempts to carry out missionary activity in the Chaco and created over a dozen mission villages in el Guairá, *pueblos de misiones* were also founded south of the Río Tebicuary. These activities are discussed later in this chapter. We shall first consider the developments which occurred in el Guairá at the end of the 1620s.

These developments were the direct consequence of the attempts of the Portuguese to obtain Indian slaves. Insofar as the Spaniards in Paraguay became involved in these events, the first activities in this area date from as early as 1553. It is known that Governor Martínez de Irala sold a number of Indians to Portuguese slave traders in mid-1553 in exchange for iron goods. Some other Spaniards (including García Rodríguez de Vergara and Nufrio Chaves)

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[26] Jaeger 1957:120; Kahle 1992:26; Meliá Lliteras 1988:86,89; Meliá Lliteras 1991:219.

[27] Ciudad Real had 30 *vecinos* in 1607 and 50 Spaniards in 1628; Santiago de Jerez had 60 *vecinos* in 1609 and 29 in 1622; Villa Rica had 100 *vecinos* in 1607 and 200 Spaniards in 1628 (Mora Mérida 1974b:67). These figures exclude women and children.

also engaged in such illegal activities in el Guairá, which were permitted by Martínez de Irala, but the number of Indians involved was small. The situation changed, however, at the end of the sixteenth century, when São Paulo (which was founded in 1553) began to serve increasingly as a base for the so-called *bandeirantes*, groups or even whole armies (*bandeiras*), consisting partly of Portuguese and partly of mestizoes, who were called *mamelucos* by the Spaniards because of their resemblance to the aggressive Arab Mamelukes. The *bandeiras* nearly always also included a good number of friendly Tupí Indians, who were permanently at loggerheads with the Guaraníes. The *bandeirantes* pillaged large areas of the interior, looking for precious metals and Indians, whom they took prisoner and sold in the slave markets on the coast (Rio de Janeiro, Santos and other places). Some *bandeiras* were officially organised expeditions, whilst others were strictly private in character. Slave hunts were openly organised from 1585 and carried out with greater intensity from 1607.

As the number of Indians declined in Brazil through plunder, mistreatment, disease and flight, the *Paulistas* also began to penetrate increasingly into the Spanish Guairá region.[28] In fact, they completely ignored the border defined under the Treaty of Tordesillas. The first organised *bandeira* to el Guairá took place in 1602-04 and consisted of about 270 Portuguese and three priests. They took away some 700 *encomienda* Indians who had been converted to Christianity. It seems to have been quite a strenuous operation for the *Paulistas*, because no further *bandeira* was organised to el Guairá until 1606. In that year, Captain Sebastião Preto entered el Guairá and took away a large number of Ybyrayaras Indians from Villa Rica. There were no *pueblos de misiones* in el Guairá at that time. In 1611 and 1612 further *bandeiras* were launched against el

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[28] The borders were 'permeable' in another respect, too, in the sense that Portuguese settled in Spanish territory and that there were contacts in both directions. When Governor Céspedes García Xería arrived in the village of Mbaracayú in 1628, he found 17 Portuguese living there and a further 5 in Ciudad Real, Santiago de Jerez and Villa Rica. Many of these *Paulistas* had married in Paraguay. The ships which sailed from Asunción at that time were partly of Portuguese origin. Like the Portuguese, some Spaniards also lived from *malocas indígenas* (Garavaglia 1983:124).

Guairá, which yielded a good number of Indians. The same Sebastião Preto captured 900 Indians in 1612, but the governor of Ciudad Real managed to free 500 of them with a small Spanish force during Preto's return to São Paulo. In 1615, the famous *bandeira* of Lázaro de Costa took place, in which the territory of what are now the states of Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul was pillaged. Soon afterwards, the first confrontation between Jesuits and slave hunters took place. In 1619, Father Maceta reported that the Portuguese had made two further incursions to capture slaves and caused destruction in three mission villages. In the same year, *vecinos* from Asunción complained at the *audiencia* of Charcas that 6 to 7,000 Indians had been carried off to Brazil, where the Portuguese had sold them as slaves. Another major *bandeira* occurred in el Guairá in 1623, in which a large number of Indians were taken prisoner.[29] The Spaniards and Indians undertook little systematic action to prevent such attacks; they were surprised by the incidental and sudden nature of the attacks and, because of the great distance from Asunción, it was not possible to provide rapid and efficient help. The Spanish population in el Guairá itself was very small.

While the razzias were at first incidental in nature, with the *bandeirantes* preferring not to try to capture Indians concentrated in reductions, the aggression changed in character from the end of the 1620s.[30] It increased in intensity and became directed mainly at the mission villages. As a result, the survival of various mission posts in el Guairá was already threatened when they were still being built up.

The authorities in São Paulo closed their eyes to the actions of the *bandeirantes*. The underlying cause was that, at that time, the Dutch wholly controlled the sea traffic off the east coast of South

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[29] Meliá Lliteras 1988:82-3; Mora Mérida 1971:79-80; González Torres 1995:-60.

[30] For the actions of the *bandeirantes* from the end of the 1620s and the depopulation of el Guairá, see: Cardozo 1938:99-189 and Gandía 1936. Also: Arango Vieira 1941:323-4; Benítez 1985:108-9,115; Cardozo 1967: 114-5; Cardozo 1989:251-6; Cardozo 1991:202-6; Groh 1970:510-8; Kohlhepp 1973-74:55-8, 61; Massare de Kostianovsky 1996:31-4; Meliá Lliteras 1988:84; Meliá Lliteras 1991:220-1; Ministerio 1987:37; Quevedo 1984a:191; Santos Hernández 1992:283; Sulmanas 1981:10,16,17-8,22,26-7; Velázquez 1975:35.

America, so that Negro slaves could no longer be regularly brought in, which meant that the Portuguese sugar plantations on the coast suffered from a labour shortage. The Portuguese then began to organise increasingly frequent *malocas*, i.e. hunting down wandering Tupí and, especially, Guaraní Indians. It goes without saying that the newly founded mission posts suffered in particular. The Portuguese found there not only a large concentration of potential slaves, but also Indians who were already more or less accustomed to regular work on the land, were not armed and offered much less resistance than the 'wild' Indians.

El Guairá suffered severely from 1628. In August 1628 the *Paulistas* (including many prominent figures) began preparations for an attack under the command of Manoel Prêto (Preto), a sugar plantation owner, and the notorious *bandeirante* Antonio Raposo Tavares. They formed four slave-hunting units, comprising a total of 900 *Paulistas* and some 2,200 Tupís. To justify the action, it was argued that mission posts had been established on Portuguese territory (although the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns were then officially united). The provincial of the Jesuits, who learned of the Portuguese intentions, gave his people in el Guairá permission to offer armed resistance. The missionaries were then engaged, however, in establishing Santa María la Mayor, as well as being occupied with the other, still new, missions and so were perhaps not wholly and quickly enough persuaded of the seriousness of the situation. On 8 September, the *bandeirantes* crossed the Río Tibagí and began to build a great palisade close to the mission villages to serve as a *fuerte* and base for attacks. They surprised a number of Christian Indians from Encarnación and then turned their attention to a number of 'heathen' *comunidades*, before concentrating their attention wholly on the mission villages. San Antonio was attacked on 30 January 1629. Some 2,000 Indians were carried off, together with whatever else could be found, after which the village was set on fire. On 23 February 1629, the *bandeirantes* descended on San Miguel, but because the fathers had evacuated the villagers in advance, they found only empty houses, on which they wreaked due havoc. In an act of revenge, they went to Jesús María, where they carried off 2,000 Indians on 20 March and killed many of those who offered resistance. San Pablo was surrendered in mid-

1629 and many Indians were carried off. The *bandeira* of 1628 was the most dramatic razzia ever. Nearly the whole Portuguese population of São Paulo, assisted by a growing army of Tupís, fell upon el Guairá; only 25 able-bodied men and the elderly had remained behind in São Paulo. In 1629 Raposo Tavares and Manoel Prêto returned to São Paulo with about 10,000 Indians; many had perished on the journey. The Indians were immediately sold by public auction on arrival. There was a great shortage of slaves and nearly all the inhabitants managed to come into the possession of some Indians on that occasion.

Some of the Indians managed to escape deportation, because the Jesuits ensured that they left the villages (Encarnación, San Pablo, Arcángeles and San Tomás as well as San Miguel) with all due speed, thereby running the risk of nevertheless falling into the hands of the Portuguese or Spaniards from Villa Rica, who could make good use of their labour, and this did indeed happen to some of the Indians. The others were gathered together again by the Jesuits where possible and distributed over the still remaining reductions, because they found their own villages more or less destroyed on their return.

The Portuguese returned in 1630 and the other villages were attacked. In March 1631 it was the turn of San Francisco Javier and San José. Eventually, nearly all the reductions were destroyed in a period of about two years and, in 1631, only the two oldest mission villages of Loreto and San Ignacio, which were situated more to one side on the Paranapanema, had been largely spared from the razzias. They had served as collection points for the few Indians from the other villages who had escaped the razzias. At the end of 1631, however, life also became increasingly difficult in these two villages.

A total of certainly more than 30,000 mission Indians were taken prisoner during the years 1628-32 and transported to Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo as slaves. Very many died on the journey, partly because of their cruel treatment by the Tupís. Those who survived the journey were traded for employment on the sugar plantations or in Portuguese homes. Some were sold to be used in places elsewhere on the coast. According to the *Cédula Real* of 16 September 1639, the total number of (Tupí and Guaraní) Indians

taken prisoner in the period 1612-31 amounted to more than 300,000, but it is generally accepted that this is too high an estimate. Meliá Lliteras, basing himself on Cardozo, estimates that a total of about 60,000 Indians were carried off during the razzias which began in 1628: about 30,000 from the missions and the remainder from the *encomienda* villages near the Spanish towns, from the Spanish towns themselves and from the forests.[31] Garavaglia estimates that the total number of Indians taken prisoner in el Guairá at that time was between 33,000 - 50,000.[32]

The Jesuits, who were not supplied with good weapons, were powerless, although they did try to accompany the Indians who had been taken prisoner and to appeal to the governor in Brazil for their release, but this had little result. Nor did the rapid evacuation of some villages have much effect, no more than the resistance that was sometimes offered with traditional weapons. Ultimately, one mission settlement fell after the other. At the end of 1631, the Jesuits therefore decided to evacuate and relocate the two remaining villages to an area farther downstream, and so the two last settlements - Loreto and San Ignacio - disappeared completely from the map of el Guairá. At least 10,000, but perhaps as many as 12,000, Guaraníes descended the Paranapanema and the Paraná at the end of 1631 with the Jesuits, under the nominal leadership of Provincial Superior Francisco Vázquez Trujillo, but in fact under the leadership of Father Antonio Ruiz de Montoya. The fleet consisted of over 700 *balsas*, canoes and small boats, as well as a number of carts. They took with them everything that they could, but the livestock and many other possessions had to be left behind.

During the exodus, the inhabitants of the neighbouring Spanish settlements, from fear of losing all their potential - cheap, if not free - labour, tried to hold back the Indians before they reached the Sete Quedas (Guairá falls). Only by threatening with a massive attack on the Spaniards did the Indians and Jesuits succeed in being granted passage. Many craft had to be left behind at the waterfalls. For five long days, during which they covered about 200 km, they

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31 Cáceres Zorrilla 1962:26; Meliá Lliteras 1988:84,89.

32 Garavaglia 1983:168.

travelled on foot through the forest. Once they were back at the river (which was again navigable), the journey became somewhat easier, but they had lost a half of their *balsas*. In the meantime, a further 2,000 Indians, who had escaped the *bandeirantes* by fleeing down the Río Piquiry, joined the group, thus adding to the problems. The journey was difficult enough in itself, but became even more unpleasant because of a shortage of food and the struggle against exhaustion. In addition, there were the attacks by wild animals and outbreaks of disease. A number of Indians deserted. Those who completed the exodus, covered a total distance of about 1000 km during the period from November 1631 to March 1632, largely along the winding Río Paranapanema and Río Paraná. They settled in April or May at the mouth of the Arroyo Yabebiry, where a temporary camp was pitched. There plague broke out (probably typhoid fever), as a result of weakness and contamination, and many more people died. After a year only about 4,000 Indians - one third of the total who had set out - remained. Many women and children, in particular, perished.

Father Ruiz de Montoya ordered two new villages to be founded for the survivors in 1632. They were given the old names of Loreto and San Ignacio Miní and were situated a few tens of kilometres northeast of present-day Posadas, on what is now Argentine territory (Fig. 6.2). San Ignacio Miní was built by Cataldino and Maceta, Loreto under the leadership of Ruiz de Montoya. In 1635, the two new settlements were a fact. The fathers received support with this resettlement from the (then already existing) villages of Itapúa and San Ignacio Guazú (see below). Moreover, after the arrival at the camp, Mission Superior Ruiz de Montoya purchased ten thousand head of beef cattle and other provisions with money from the Spanish king, so that he could supply the population that had been weakened by disease with more food, and he sent people to Asunción to buy seed. In 1632, the two villages were already being attacked by the *Paulistas* again but, after some time, life

became considerably safer, partly because the Jesuits speedily began arming the Guaraníes.[33]

After the mission villages had been plundered or relocated at the end of 1631, the Portuguese could only give full reign to their rapacity on the villages and hamlets inhabited by *encomendados* (where these still existed), on the sparse Indian population still living free in *tolderías* outside the reductions, and on the Spanish towns of Ciudad Real, Villa Rica and Santiago de Jerez themselves, where a few Indians lived besides Creoles and mestizoes. It was only now that the inhabitants of these towns really began to appreciate what a buffer role the mission villages had performed.

In 1632, the curtain fell completely. Raposo Tavares, accompanied by Andrés Fernández and many others, again descended on the region via the Río Ivaí. In June, seven or nine small villages inhabited by *indios encomendados* were destroyed. Ciudad Real and Villa Rica were also destroyed (as well as Santiago de Jerez and the four Itatín reductions in what is now the state of Mato Grosso; see below). Ciudad Real disappeared from the map, as did Santiago de Jerez; only Villa Rica survived. The Spaniards living in the latter place, however, who were poor and numbered about 500, had to withdraw to the other side of the Río Paraná in October 1632 in order to escape their Portuguese besiegers. They took with them their *encomendados* (about 4,000) who had escaped the razzias.[34] Villa Rica even had to be relocated several times because of the continuing aggression and other problems, and so was nicknamed *ciudad andariega* and *ciudad viajera* (walking or travelling town) and did not find its definitive location until 1682, far from the region where the *bandeirantes* held sway and considerably closer to Asunción.[35]

It is quite understandable that the Jesuit missions and the Spanish colonists were unable to withstand the Portuguese aggression. The Portuguese (including *mamelucos*) were well armed, they were

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[33] For a concise description of this exodus, see the publication by Ruez (1953). Also: Groh 1970:518-20; McNaspy 1987:25-6; Meliá Lliteras 1988:85.

[34] Gónzalez Torres 1995:60; Meliá Lliteras 1988:86.

[35] The department in which it has since then been situated is therefore called: Guairá. For further details, see Chapter 7.

helped in their slave hunting by large hordes of friendly Tupí Indians (armed with more traditional weapons) and they arrived in such numbers that the rather small Indian and Spanish settlements were no match for them. Moreover, the mission villages were at that time either poorly armed or not armed at all; they had no firearms, in any event, which was why the fathers generally advised their Indians not to resist the superior forces. But that was not the only explanation for the dramatic developments. A further factor was that Villa Rica and Ciudad Real (like Santiago de Jerez) were so remote from Asunción as to be virtually isolated. Help could by no means always be offered quickly. Another crucial factor, however, was certainly laxity and a lack of political will. The governor, Luis de Céspedes García Xería, took no action whatever. Consequently, after he had taken up his post, no fewer than six Guairá reductions were destroyed: firstly, Encarnación, San Antonio, San Miguel and Jesús María and, in March 1631, San Francisco and San José. The others were under constant threat. Father Ruiz de Montoya, in fact, also appealed in vain to the commandant of Villa Rica for support.

The role of Céspedes was, in fact, a very dubious one. When he finally travelled from Brazil to Asunción in July 1628 (after his appointment in 1625), on his passage through el Guairá he had forbidden the reduction Indians and priests there to own firearms and munition and he had subsequently not troubled himself with the fate of the Indians when they were attacked. He advised the Jesuits not to offer any resistance. His attitude was undoubtedly related to the fact that he had spent a long time in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro before his arrival in Paraguay, had made many friends among the Portuguese and had married Doña Victoria de Saa, the cousin of the governor of São Vicente, Martim de Saa, in 1628. She was the owner of a large sugar plantation employing several thousand slaves. After his appointment he had not travelled from Brazil by sea and along the rivers, but overland to Paraguay, even though this had been forbidden because of the actions of the *bandeirantes*. He had been accompanied on the journey by Portuguese, who also provided an escort when his wife came to Paraguay in 1630. As a result of all this, Céspedes was on better terms with the Portuguese than with the Spanish and Indian population, and he could not in

any event oppose the former as a matter of course. He allowed the Portuguese a free hand. It is a fact that the attacks of the Portuguese became increasingly insolent when he was in power. Céspedes' wife's *ingenio* in Bahia was supplied at that time with more than 2,000 Indian slaves. Because of the course of events, Governor Céspedes was quite soon suspected of collaboration with the Portuguese. He was deposed in 1631 and tried. The *cabildo* of Asunción then temporarily took over the administration of the province.[36]

The responsibility for the razzias was rightly partly laid at Céspedes' door, but nor did the Spanish population in el Guairá offer any support when the missions were attacked. The Spaniards regarded the mission villages as more or less autonomous and, moreover, had very little sympathy for the Jesuits who, through their missionary work, had only set a limit to the use of indigenous labour. A number of Spaniards collaborated with the Portuguese. A quite different circumstance was that the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns were united in the period 1580-1640, so that the expansion activities of the Portuguese were no longer illegal. Apart from that, 'Lisbon' had never taken much notice of protests against incursions across the boundary. The Portuguese authorities had always approved of territorial expansion and Indians did provide useful labour.

The activities of the *bandeirantes* resulted in the whole area extending east of the mountain chains of Amambay and Mbaracayú, the Paraná-Yguazú, the Sierra de Misiones and the Río Uruguay to the Atlantic Ocean, being abandoned by the Spaniards. El Guairá was depopulated. Nor were the mission villages in the Tape and eastern Uruguay region (see below) able to survive. The region of Mbiazá (on the Atlantic coast) with Santa Catalina had, in fact, already been abandoned earlier. This made it all the easier for Portuguese to extend their sphere of influence. El Guairá and the other eastern regions were *de facto* incorporated into the *capitanía* of São Vicente in 1632.

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[36] For the role of Céspedes, see, *inter alia*: Cáceres Zorrilla 1962:24; Cardozo 1989:249-51; Gandía 1936:49-64; Ministerio 1987:36-7; Mora Mérida 1973: 194; Plá 1963:135.

The developments were incidentally a sequel to what had already happened closer to São Paulo. In less than six years, according to Gandía, the Portuguese had destroyed over 300 hamlets here and killed about 200,000 Indians.[37]

It will be clear that, through these developments, the Portuguese got under their control areas lying far to the west of the Line of Tordesillas. It was not the case, however, that Portuguese colonisation rapidly accelerated behind this line after the depopulation. Their interest disappeared after their plundering and a *desierto* remained behind. El Guairá became a peripheral, more or less forgotten region, where no important new settlements were created, but only a few Indians roamed around.

The first missions near the middle Paraná

The third area where missionary activity was started following the decision of the end of 1609 was situated, as we have said, in the south of the province of Paraguay, beyond the line formed by the Río Tebicuary and the Río Yguazú. It eventually became the Order's principal mission territory. This southern mission region was initially very extensive and comprised four sub-areas: a) the zone near the left and right banks of the middle Paraná, b) the area along the left and right banks of the Uruguay, c) the basins of the Acaray-Yguazú, and d) the Sierra del Tape region (Fig. 6.2). There was subsequently, as we shall see, a process of concentration.

The first mission settlement was created there in 1610. In the previous year, *cacique* Arapysandú had requested the governor on behalf of a group of Guaraníes who lived south of the Río Tebicuary to send one or more Jesuits to give them religious instruction. The Fathers Marcial de Lorenzana and Francisco de San Martín were sent to the region by the provincial superior. They left Asunción accompanied by the *cacique* and were joined in Yaguarón by the secular priest, Hernando de la Cueva, who enjoyed great prestige among the Indians and considerably eased the first contacts

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[37] Gandía 1936:45.

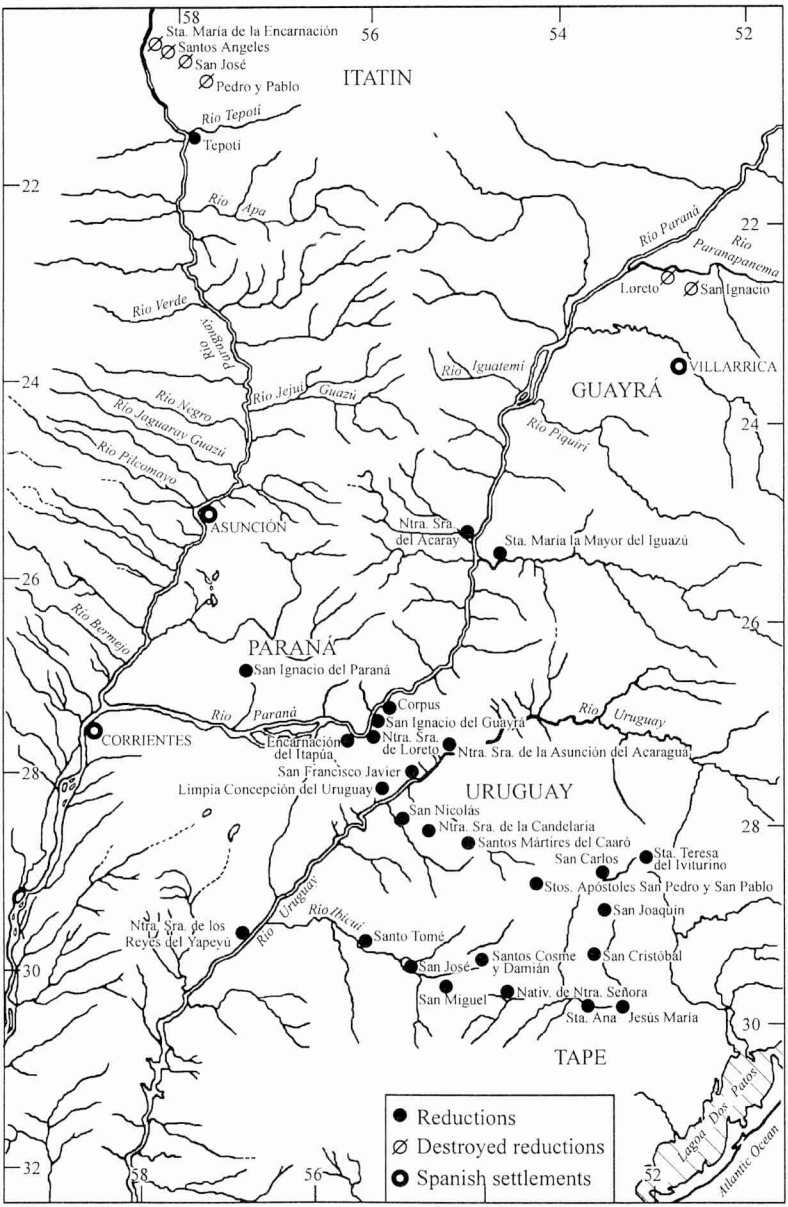

Fig.6.2. The Jesuit missions existing in the period 1632-34 (After Maeder, ed., 1990:14-5; slightly amended).

between the Indians and the missionaries. After a difficult journey, the priests arrived in the territory of *cacique* Arapysandú on the far bank of the Tebicuary at the end of December with 200 Christian Indians. The fathers founded a reduction there on 29 December 1609. Iron objects and other gifts, together with the support of the *caciques,* ensured that a large number of Indians settled there. This was, in fact, the very first Jesuit reduction in Paraguay, because it had already been founded before the missionary work in el Guairá had started. The settlement was formalised in the following year, when the village and chapel were dedicated to San Ignacio. The reduction was soon given the official name of San Ignacio Guazú to distinguish it from San Ignacio Miní, which the Order had founded in el Guairá in 1610. The settlement was originally situated considerably farther to the south, apparently at the place called Itaguy or Jaguará-canitá and where Santa Rita is now situated, quite close to the confluence of the Paraná with the Paraguay and opposite Itatí. According to Maeder, the region was also referred to as el Añapé. In 1628, the village was moved to the site where the chapel of Santo Ángel was later built. At that point, San Ignacio was situated 12 *leguas* from the Río Paraná. In 1667, it was decided to move the village a quarter of a *legua* farther to the east, and this became the final location in 1668.

The Jesuit Marcial Lorenzana was the founder, together with Francisco de San Martín, of San Ignacio. His colleague, Father Roque González de Santa Cruz, who came to San Ignacio in 1611 after his failed mission to the Chaco, was the one, however, who built a large part of the settlement and gave it a more permanent aspect. Roque González planned the *plaza*, laid out a street pattern and had new - individual - houses built. He took all the necessary measures for a regulated Christian and socio-economic existence. For example, he established a small school for religious instruction and started to encourage arable farming and stockbreeding. We may say therefore that Lorenzana founded the mission, but that Roque

González de Santa Cruz consolidated it.[38] In 1613, San Ignacio Guazú was already home to 6,000 souls.

As we stated earlier, the two Jesuits in San Ignacio benefited greatly from the activities undertaken earlier by the Franciscan missionary, Luis Bolaños. They learned more Guaraní from him and were able to build on the missionary work that he had started south of the Paraná in the years 1607-9. That missionary work had remained of limited extent, because Bolaños had been active mainly north of the Tebicuary, but he had nevertheless, as we have stated, initiated the establishment of a mission settlement in those years, bearing the name Yaguara-camygtá. The Jesuits, in fact, took it over. The first Jesuit reduction did not differ in any way from a Franciscan reduction.[39]

It was not until 1615 that a second mission settlement, Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación de Itapúa, was founded in the Paraná region - much farther to the east. It was the first reduction of Guaraní Indians who did not fall under the *encomienda* regime (whereas the Indians of Loreto, San Ignacio Miní and San Ignacio Guazú did still fall under that system; see Chapter 15). Itapúa was founded by the Fathers Roque González de Santa Cruz and Diego Borroa on 25 March 1615 on the left bank of the Río Paraná, on a *barranca* close to present-day (Argentine) Posadas. It was a site which had already been visited by the first-named founder in 1614. In 1703, the village was moved to the present location in Paraguay, on the right bank of the Paraná, where it was sited on a gently sloping *loma* which protected the village against floods.[40]

In the second half of 1615, Father Roque González de Santa Cruz also founded the reduction of Santa Ana (also known as Laguna de Santa Ana), farther downstream along the Río Paraná, near the Isla de Apipé, where he congregated over 300 persons.

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[38] The latter incidentally did even more in the four years that he stayed in San Ignacio: he completed there the translation of the catechism started by the Franciscan, Luis Bolaños (Cambas 1986:80).

[39] For San Ignacio Guazú, see: Alegre 1986:66-7; González Torres 1995:163; Maeder 1984a:122; McNaspy 1987:19; Meliá Lliteras 1969:16-7; Necker 1990:123; Santos Hernández 1976:132-3; Santos Hernández 1992:278.

[40] Azara 1990:254; Cambas 1986:79-90.

However, at the request of Governor Hernandarias, this mission was transferred to the Franciscans. In 1618 he founded Yaguapoa about 20 km south of Itapúa, but this reduction existed for only a short time and little is known about it.[41]

From Itapúa, Corpus Christi was founded in the Paraná basin by the Fathers Pedro Romero and Diego Borroa in 1622. This village was situated to the west of the Río Paraná on the Arroyo Iniambey (Ytembey). In 1701 it was moved to the east side of the river and developed on its definitive site, three *leguas* north of San Ignacio Miní.[42]

Nuestra Señora de Loreto and San Ignacio Miní were built near the left bank of the Río Paraná from 1632. As we have said, these villages were populated by Indians who had fled from el Guairá (where the villages of the same name had been situated on the Río Paranapanema) under the leadership of Father Ruiz de Montoya after the Portuguese attacks. After some minor relocations Loreto was built on its definitive site in 1686.[43]

The villages south of the Tebicuary-Yguazú were populated not only by Paranáes, but also by descendants of those Carios who had sought refuge in southern Paraguay after 1556 in order to remain outside the Spaniards' sphere of influence.[44]

Settlement foundation activities in the Uruguay region

Shortly after the foundation of Itapúa, the Order also began to engage in settlement activities on the upper course of the Uruguay. Nuestra Señora de la Concepción (1620) and San Francisco Javier (1629) were founded on the right bank of this river and, farther to the south, Santos Reyes de Yapeyú (1626).

Concepción was founded from Itapúa by Roque González de Santa Cruz on 8 December 1620 on the instructions of Provincial

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41 González Torres 1995:54,167; Necker 1990:125-6.

42 Azara 1990:262-3; Fernández Ramos 1929:45-6.

43 Azara 1990:260-1.

44 Velázquez 1981:46.

Superior Pedro Oñate. It was founded because there were indications that some 60,000 Indians fleeing from Portuguese slave hunters had arrived on the banks of the Uruguay from the area of la Cananea and Santa Catalina. Concepción was sited close to the Río Uruguay and was situated in such impenetrable forests that it was never in real danger and was therefore never relocated.[45] Yapeyú was founded by Father Pedro Romero and San Francisco Javier by Father José Ordóñez. The latter village was situated on the Arroyo Tabytihú, a little farther north than where it was situated at the end of the colonial period.[46]

At about the same time, on the initiative of Father Roque González de Santa Cruz, the Jesuits embarked upon the evangelisation of the areas lying east of the Río Uruguay - i.e. the left bank - and the basin of the Ijuí. Here there arose San Nicolás (1626), Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria (1627), Santos Mártires del Caaró (1628) San Carlos del Caapí (1631), Asunción del Acaraguá (1628/1632), and Santos Apóstoles Pedro y Pablo (1632/3).[47] However, the Indians in this region proved to be somewhat mistrustful. They saw in the missionaries the forerunners of the Spanish colonial authority and killed three missionaries, so that Spanish troops were forced to intervene. Father Roque González de Santa Cruz was killed in November 1628 when he was in the process of founding the reduction of Santos Mártires. After that there was no further resistance from the Indians.[48]

Mission settlements in the Yguazú-Acaray and Tape regions

The Jesuit Order founded two reductions in the region of the Yguazú-Acaray, i.e. Nuestra Señora de la Natividad de Acaray (1624) and Santa María la Mayor del Yguazú (1626).

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45 Azara 1990:284; Fernández Ramos 1929:44-5.

46 Azara 1990:270; Fernández Ramos 1929:49.

47 For more details about some of these villages, see the Annex to Chapter 8.

48 Meliá Lliteras 1991:218.

The reduction of Natividad de Acaray had actually already been founded on 8 September 1619, when it was established by the Fathers Diego Borroa and Claudio Ruyer, but it was repopulated in 1624 and then started to show more dynamism. The village started with 1,500-2,000 inhabitants, but had 10,000 at the end of 1631 (when the Indians left el Guairá). It was situated in the upper part of the fork-shaped piece of land (*horqueta*) formed by the Río Acaray and the Río Paraná, going in the direction of el Guairá, and formed the *último punto poblado* on the latter river. The settlement was abandoned in 1633.[49]

Santa María was founded in 1626, again by the Fathers Diego Borroa and Claudio Ruyer, in the *horqueta* created by the confluence of the Yguazú with the Paraná. In November 1633, the village was moved close to the spot where Mártires had previously been situated. From there it was moved to its definitive location.[50]

In the province of el Tape (Sierra del Tape with the basins of the Río Jacuí and the Río Pardo), after the dramatic depopulation of el Guairá, no fewer than 10 reductions, into which over 50,000 Indians were concentrated, were founded in the period 1632-34.

The Sierra del Tape was the extensive region between the Río Uruguay and the Sierra del Mar (Serra do Mar), what is now the northwest of Rio Grande do Sul and situated for the greater part between the rivers Jacuí and Ybicuí.[51] According to Fassbinder, because of its inhospitable character (*Rauheit des Bodens*) and the stubborn resistance of the native population, the Sierra del Tape had at that time never yet been entered by a Spanish soldier.

The villages founded here were: Santa Teresa del Ivitiruno (1632/34), San Miguel (1632), San José (1632) Jesús María del Iviticaray (1632/1633), Santa Ana del Igay (1632/1633), San Tomé

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49 For further details about the location and development of the reduction of Natividad de Acaray, see the publication by Gutiérrez (1984).

50 Azara 1990:269.

51 In the early colonial period (before the arrival of the Jesuits), the Tape region was referred to by the Spaniards as the *provincia de Vera* (Roulet 1995:50). According to Palacios & Zoffoli (1991:230), the literal meaning of Tape is 'road'. The name Tape was used to indicate both the district and the local Indian population. The name has sometimes also been used to indicate all the Indians of the Guaraní missions, but that is not correct.

(1632/1633), Natividad de Nuestra Señora (1632/1633), San Cosme y San Damián (1633/1634), San Joaquín (1633/1634) and San Cristóbal (1634) (Fig. 6.2).[52] The foundation of these villages was mainly due to the initiatives and instructions of the indefatigable Pedro Romero, who was the superior of the missions in the Paraná, Uruguay and Tape regions in the years 1632-36.

Missionary work in el Itatín

In the 1630s, missionary work among the Itatines also got under way.[53] Their territory - el Itatín - was situated between the Río Taquary in the north and the Río Apa in the south; the boundaries in the west and east were the Río Paraguay and the Serra de Maracaju (or 'Sierra de los Itatines'), respectively.[54] The area therefore formed part of the southern Pantanal in what is now the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul. Relative to Asunción, el Itatín was the back of beyond.

The area did not possess any special natural riches, such as precious metals, but was viewed at that time as a region which could function as a base for approaching Alto Perú and therefore as an 'intermediate station' to reduce the isolation from Asunción. Moreover, the area possessed quite a large indigenous population by

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[52] For the Tape region and its missions, see: Blumers 1992:28; Carbonell de Masy 1992:88; Fassbinder 1926:25; Garavaglia 1983:128; Kohlhepp 1973-4: 58; Maeder 1990 (ed.):15-6; Meliá Lliteras 1991:218; Palacios & Zoffoli 1991: 230. The foundation dates of the missions vary somewhat in the sources consulted. Maeder (1990, ed.:15-6) does not give a specific year, but states that all the villages were founded in the years 1632-34, which is, indeed, correct. For further details of the villages, see the Annex to Chapter 8.

[53] For the missionary work among the Itatines and the associated settlements, see, especially: Gadelha 1980: particularly 235-42,266-75; Gadelha 1986: 151,154-8. Also Azara 1990:244-5; Benítez 1985:102-3,110,122; Blumers 1992:51; Garavaglia 1983:115-6,128-9,132-3,167; Maeder 1984a:135; Maeder 1989:52; Meliá Lliteras 1969:24-5; Owens 1977:205-14.

[54] The Serra de Maracaju forms the northern continuation of the Cordillera de Amambay and should not be confused with the Cordillera de Mbaracayú, which runs in a west-east direction and is the southern continuation of the Cordillera de Amambay.

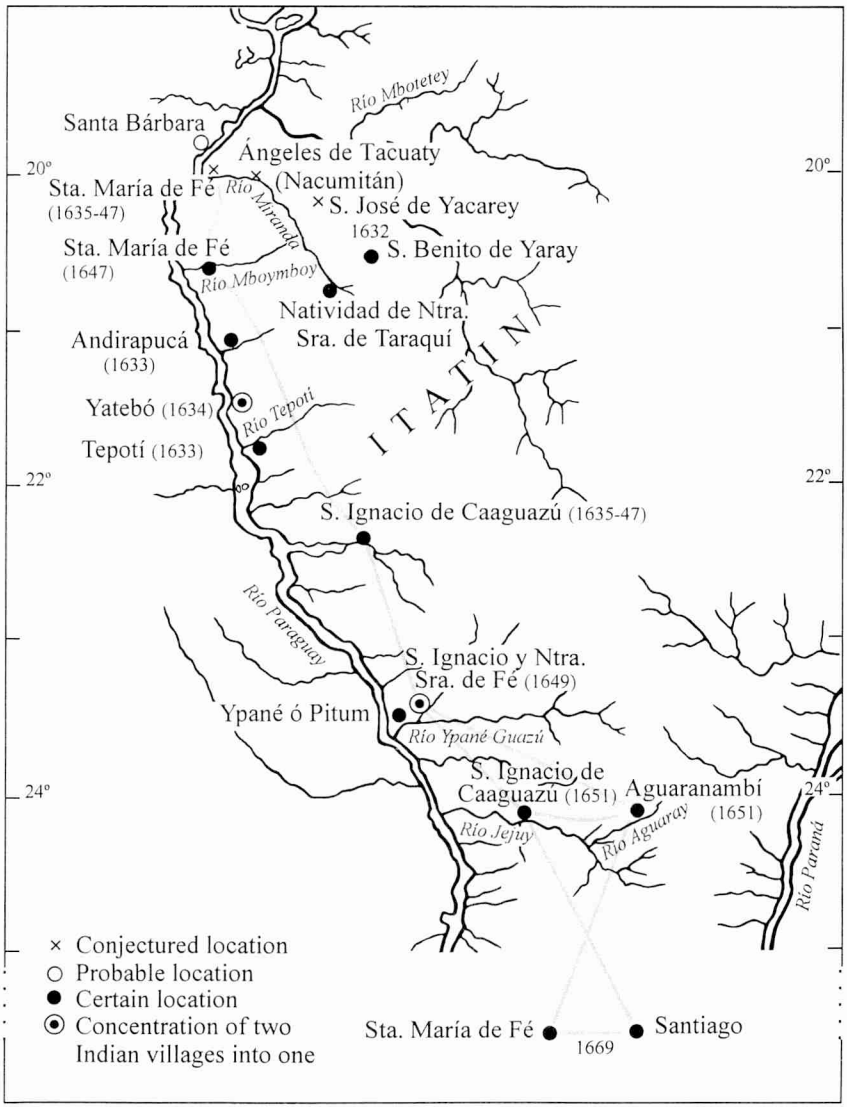

Fig. 6.3. The Jesuit missions founded in el Itatín and their changing locations, 1631-69 (after Gadelha 1980:243; Hernández 1913/I: facing 22; Lobo Lahmeyer 1959:370).

the standards of the time. As such, it was seen by the Spanish *encomenderos* as a rather attractive area, as shown by the decision to establish Santiago de Jerez there. The area was of strategic important for the Portuguese, because it could serve as a zone of passage to Amazonia and the mines in Alto Perú.

When el Guairá was lost to the missionaries at the beginning of the 1630s, the superior of the missions there, Father Ruiz de Montoya, decided to take the evangelisation among the Itatines in hand. He did that partly at the request of the Spanish authorities, not only because they considered missionary activity to be useful, but also because they expected that the Spanish colonial border would then be better protected against the aggression of the Portuguese. It might also limit the tensions between colonists and natives. The missionary work began at the end of 1631, when two Belgian missionaries, who had gained wide experience in el Guairá, were sent to el Itatín to explore the possibilities for evangelisation in Alto Paraguay and to initiate, if possible. They were Father Diego Ransonnier, who was called Diego Ferrer in the missions, and Josse Van Suerck, known as Justo Mansilla in Paraguay.[55] They received assistance from Brother Mateo Fernández and Fathers Nicolás Henart and Ignacio Martínez. The missionaries made use of the services of a number of Christian Indians who had come from el Guairá, and initially also received some support from a few Spanish *vecinos*.

The fathers started their missionary work among the Indians who had already been allocated as *encomendados*. The first mission which they established was in a small village on the banks of the Río Miranda, known as Araqua. Diego Paracu was the principal *cacique* there and was well disposed towards the Jesuits. The missionaries managed to register about 300 Indians with the support of the Spaniards and obliged them to attend daily to learn the catechism. In the same year, they succeeded in penetrating to the village of Ñaeumitang (Ñacumitan), where the *caciques* and other notables, however, showed little sympathy for the overtures of

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[55] Their names are written in various ways in the sources. See, for example: Fassbinder 1926:25; Groh 1970:510; Santos Hernández 1992:279.

Father Ignacio Martínez. A third mission was established in Ybu, which was situated in a district ruled by *cacique* Ñanduabuzú, who was regarded as the principal ruler of the whole Itatín region. The fathers succeeded in concentrating 500 families at a fourth location - in Taraquí. The missionary work was facilitated here thanks to the proximity of the reduction of Guarambaré (which had been created by the Franciscans). A total of four mission settlements had therefore been created up to the end of 1632, which received the names of Ángeles de Tacuaty, San Benito de Yaray, San José de Yacarey and Natividad de Taraquy. They had quite large populations and were situated not far from the town of Santiago de Jerez on the Río Mbotetey. In addition to these villages, there were also various *poblados de encomienda* (accommodating not only Guaraníes), which fell under *encomenderos* from Santiago.

The missionaries tried to accelerate the success of their missionary work by building good contacts with the children. They tried to avoid confrontations with the Spaniards by not admitting to their missions any Indians who had escaped from the reductions of secular priests, because they were nearly always persons who had been subject to the *encomienda* system. Nevertheless, a tense relationship quite soon arose between the missionaries and the Spaniards, because the Jesuits also revealed themselves here to be opponents of the *encomienda* system. A large number of Indians reacted more positively and were quite spontaneously prepared to place themselves under the wing of the Jesuits, because they hoped it would give them greater protection against exploitation by the Spaniards.

In 1632, a large *bandeira* of *Paulistas* and their Tupí allies, under the command of Ascenso Quadros, descended on el Itatín. Thanks to the treachery of one of the *vecinos,* they were able to capture and destroy Santiago de Jerez in December 1632. Help from Asunción arrived too late. The *bandeirantes* then made their way to the *encomienda* villages and quickly occupied them. Nor naturally were the four mission settlements spared; the Portuguese attacked the reduction of Ñanduabuzú and took all the Indians prisoner. As we stated earlier, the inhabitants of Santiago de Jerez were few in number and led a difficult existence, partly because they had not succeeded in getting many Indians to work for them.

They understood that there was little sense in offering real resistance in this remote corner of the province and perhaps sacrificing their lives. A number of *Jerezanos* therefore moved to Asunción and tried to take the Indians of their *encomienda* with them, insofar at least as they had not been carried off or escaped. Near Asunción, they founded with a number of Ñuarás Indians (a subgroup of the Itatines) the village of San Benito de Yois. Numerous other *vecinos,* however, joined the Portuguese in carrying off Indians, whom they could also sell as slaves. They became guides to the Mamelukes, who first directed their attacks to the most populous Indian villages. The indigenous population was virtually powerless against the Portuguese bands. Many were carried off as slaves. A considerable proportion of the Indians of the four Jesuit reductions appears to have survived the attack, however, by fleeing into the forests. A small group of Indians from the *encomienda* villages entrusted to *vecinos* from Santiago de Jerez also managed to escape.

There was therefore little chance of the *encomenderos* helping the Indians and the missionaries to repulse the aggression. The *encomenderos* failed in their duty to protect the Indians allocated to them and would have liked to have seen the back of the Jesuits.

The Portuguese aggression put an end to the Itatines' resistance to the Jesuits' missionary work insofar as any resistance still remained. This was partly due to the fact that the fathers had managed to save a few *caciques* and a number of Indians from the hands of the Portuguese. The fathers now also obtained, in addition to the support of *cacique* Paracu, the cooperation of *cacique* Ñanduabuzú, who had at first opposed them. After more than a year, therefore, there was considerably greater trust in the missionaries.

With the Indians who had survived the attacks and had partly to be brought back out of the forests, the fathers founded two reductions. One was Tepotí. It was the home of the subjects of *cacique* D. Diego Paracu and was situated on the banks of the Río Tepotí. This reduction was dedicated to San Benito and its official name was therefore San Benito de Tepotí. The other reduction was that of *cacique* Ñanduabuzú, who chose a site on the banks of the Río Andirapucá. The village was named after the latter river. It was situated within the radius of action of the Payaguá and Guaycurú, with whom the Itatines had an alliance.

The years 1633 and 1634 were a difficult time for the two villages. 1633 was marked by a disastrous drought and 1634 by excessive rainfall, which caused widespread flooding by the Pantanal rivers. The villages were also attacked by *bandeirantes*, who destroyed the crops. Attempts were made from the *Colegio* in Asunción to provide support, but these could not ward off hunger and epidemics. Two-thirds of the Indians in the reductions perished, while the plague also carried off the Fathers Diego Ferrer and Nicolás Henart. The epidemic spread over the whole province and also affected the (originally Franciscan) reductions of Guarambaré and Ypané, which were situated outside el Itatín, south of the Río Apa. These events were followed by months of disruption and disorder; nearly everything seemed to have been lost.

In 1634, the two reductions were merged into a single *doctrina*, Yatebó (also known as: Yatibó or Yatebo), situated between the rivers Andirapucá and Tepotí. The Itatines were again split up, however, in the following year and they formed the reductions of San Ignacio de Caaguazú del Norte and Nuestra Señora de Fe (or de Taré), also known as Santa María de Fe and later as Aguaranambí. The first-named mission settlement was situated 70 *leguas* from Asunción and lay not far from the Río Apa, in the south of the Itatín territory, while the latter village was situated no less than 130 *leguas* from the capital, close to the Río Miranda, i.e. more towards the northern border of the Itatín region.

Better times returned in 1639. The Order sent new missionaries, who were supported by the *Colegio* in Asunción with livestock, plant material and seeds, iron hoes, ploughs, oxen, textiles and other necessities. The Itatines, who had been weakened and reduced in number by all their tribulations, were more willing than ever to gather under the Jesuits' protection. The opposition of the shamans was greatly diminished by that time. The missionaries took over the function of the shamans in the new villages and partly also that of the *caciques*. The two missions were organised in a similar manner to those situated farther to the south, beyond the Tebicuary. The fathers received much support in concentrating the Itatines from Christian Indians, in particular those from Nuestra Señora de Loreto, who had escaped from el Guairá and accompanied the fathers to el Itatín.

The provincial superior, Father Juan Baptista Ferrufino, noted in around 1645 that the missions in el Itatín had achieved a certain level of prosperity: five fathers were working there, they were no longer troubled by magicians and superstition, the churches had gradually become more handsome and the services were beginning to be graced with music. The Indians were showing increasing respect and appreciation for the fathers, who energetically devoted themselves to them and did not shrink from privation. The Jesuits succeeded in concentrating a total of about 7,500 Itatines up to 1647. According to Garavaglia, they were no more than the remnants from a number of *encomienda* villages which had been in the hands of Spaniards from Santiago de Jerez.[56]

Around that time, the Order had built up such a stable position in el Itatín and had such surpluses available that it felt justified in expanding the missionary work. Father Pedro Romero, the superior of the missions, therefore received permission from the provincial superior and rector of the *Colegio* to begin evangelisation on the other side of the Paraguay. He established a small reduction in 1645, which was dedicated to Santa Bárbara, but he was unable to consolidate it. He and Brother Mateus Fernández were even murdered.

The prosperity was of relatively short duration. On 8 September 1647, Nuestra Señora de Taré was subject to a surprise attack by *Paulistas* under the command of Antonio Raposo Tavares. Thanks to the fact that many Indians were working in the fields, the damage was limited, but nevertheless some 220 Indians were taken prisoner. The fathers assembled the remainder, mounted a counter-attack and managed to liberate many of the captured Indians. After the attack the fathers moved the mission closer to that of Caaguazú. The migrants settled in the vicinity of the Río Mboymboy. The person who refounded the mission was the French Jesuit, Manuel Berthod. The relocation meant that fields had to be abandoned and it was accompanied by privations such as hunger and disease. On 1 November 1648, the - undefended - reduction of Nuestra Señora de Taré was again attacked by a Portuguese unit which was comman-

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[56] Schallenberger 1984:74-5; Garavaglia 1983:128-9.

ded by André Fernandes and formed part of the *bandeira* of Raposo Tavares. A counterattack mounted by the Jesuits on 7 November unfortunately did not end well for the Indians.

These events led the fathers to leave el Itatín with their neophytes. They crossed the Río Apa with them, in the direction of Guarambaré and Ypané, and established a new village in 1649. They hoped to receive Spanish support there, but the Spanish governor who was then in power had little sympathy for the Jesuits, while the Order also found itself in conflict with bishop/governor Cárdenas and the fathers were even compelled to leave Asunción for a time. The Indians were divided between *encomenderos*. When the fathers were able to return in 1650 and could continue their work among the Itatines as normal, the latter were in a pitiful and confused state, which meant that the Order had, in fact, more or less to start again. There was no question of a return to the depopulated Itatín. The Itatín region was finally lost and quite soon afterwards became the domain of Chaco Indians, especially of the Guaycurú - and, more specifically, the Mbayá -, who took over the cattle that had been left behind and learned to break in horses. They developed their horse-riding skills and became absolute lords and masters of the region.

In 1650-51, two new reductions were established, which were both sited near the Río Jejuy and were again given the names Santa María de Fe (or Aguaranambí) and San Ignacio de Caaguazú. Because of their situation in a threatened frontier zone, they acquired the character of *presidios*. The Itatines lost their independence from that time for good. They became dependent on the Jesuits and, besides losing their territory, they gradually also lost much of their identity.

The new location of the two villages also proved not to be wholly safe, because they regularly ran the risk of being attacked by the Mbayáes, who were becoming increasingly dominant in the north of Eastern Paraguay. The missions had to endure, for example, an attack by Chaco Indians in 1661, which fortunately failed. Their isolation constituted another problem. The fathers therefore requested the *audiencia* of Charcas for permission to relocate the villages on a safer and better site, south of the Río Tebicuary. This was approved and implemented in 1668-69, when the inhabitants of

the two Itatín missions were transferred to the main mission region beyond the Tebicuary, 100 *leguas* farther to the south. This put an end to the southward migration that had started in 1634. Santa María de Fe retained its name on the new site, but because of the confusing proximity of San Ignacio Guazú, San Ignacio de Caaguazú was given a new name: Santiago. Now that they were situated in safe territory and so freed from constant attack, the villages could at last be given a more definitive form of organisation. In addition to arable farming, stockbreeding also had a greater opportunity to develop. The population grew to such an extent that, later, it was even possible to found a daughter settlement - Santa Rosa. The obverse of the developments described above was that the whole region north of the Río Apa had been surrendered.

Fresh attacks of the *bandeirantes*; contraction of the mission zone

We have seen above that the Jesuits undertook missionary activities in six areas, beginning in 1609: el Guairá (from 1610), the zone along both sides of the middle Paraná (from 1609), the zone along both sides of the Río Uruguay (from 1619/20), the region of the rivers Yguazú and Acaray (1619), the mountain chains of the Tape region (from 1631/32) and el Itatín (from 1631).[57] Attempts were also undertaken in the Chaco, but these were unsuccessful.

Both the missionaries and the Indians adapted their behaviour during those decades. For the Guaraníes, it meant that they became accustomed to living together in larger villages instead of in small *aldeas*, although the new settlements were initially still built from the same traditional materials. The missionary activity also led to the intensification of arable farming, to the introduction of livestock on a small scale, to the giving of instruction in the Christian faith and to attempts by the missionaries to bring the Indians' way of life into conformity with Christian morality.

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[57] Maeder & Gutiérrez 1994:8.

The six areas named above differed greatly from each other and were so dispersed that they were separated by great distances. Communications were difficult and perilous in those days, which meant that not only were regular mutual contacts impossible, but also that the various villages could be given spiritual and logistical support from the *Colegio* in Asunción only with great difficulty. This situation certainly did not aid the efficiency of the missionary work.

The principal problem with which the missionaries initially had to contend, however, was not so much the isolation and the lack of experience, but the aggression of the *bandeirantes* from São Paulo. We have already described the effects of their attacks on the mission villages in el Guairá, but this was not the end of their aggression. When there was nothing and no-one left in el Guairá after 1632, the Portuguese and *mamelucos* with their Tupí allies turned their attention farther south and appeared on the scene in the mission region there.

The two missions in the Yguazú-Acaray region, which had a very isolated situation, were the first to suffer and, in 1633, it was decided to abandon the villages. The inhabitants were moved farther south and distributed between the Corpus Christi and Itapúa reductions. Shortly afterwards - in 1634 - the fathers decided to refound Santa María la Mayor. They relocated it in the Uruguay region, where it was situated between the villages of Concepción and San Francisco Javier (see Fig. 8.1).

In 1636, the *bandeirantes* descended on the recently founded settlements in the Tape and Uruguay regions. In December 1636, Antonio Raposo Tavares attacked four villages in the basin of the Jacuí (Tape): Jesús María, Santa Ana, San Joaquín and San Cristóbal (Fig. 6.2). The *Paulistas* suffered many losses, but nevertheless disappeared with a large contingent of Indians, besides destroying the villages. In October 1637, the *bandeira* of André Fernández attacked Santa Teresa (on the Río Tacuarí), followed by San Carlos, Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria and Santos Apóstoles San Pedro y San Pablo. In 1638, the region was scoured by a *bandeira* under the command of Fernando Dias Pais. He besieged the reduction of Santos Apóstoles at the end of 1638. Here, too, Indians were taken prisoner. The consequence of the various attacks

was that the Tape region became depopulated in 1635-39. Blumers and Meliá Lliteras believe that it is not exaggerated to assume that around 25,000 Indians in the Tape region became the victims of the actions, either perishing in the attacks, being carried off or dying from hunger and disease when the mission economy broke down. According to Gandía, some 40,000 Indians were carried off from the Tape and Uruguay regions.

Since the Jesuits and the Guaraníes saw no possibility of defending themselves, it was decided to move the remaining villages to the other side of the Uruguay (the area of the right bank), more outside the reach of the *Paulistas*. The villages of Mártires and Apóstoles were the first to be moved, at the beginning of 1638, followed by San Miguel, San Carlos, San José, San Nicolás and San Tomé.

The tide began to turn at the end of the 1630s, because the Jesuits and the Indians entrusted to them succeeded in responding increasingly effectively to the attacks. In January 1639, they inflicted a defeat on the Portuguese at Caazapá-Miní. In March of the same year they defeated the *bandeiras* of Jerónimo Pedroso and Domingo Cordeiro, who had invaded the region between the Yguazú and the Uruguay and attacked reductions in the Paraná and the Uruguay regions, at Caazapá-Guazú. An important breakthrough subsequently was that Father Ruiz de Montoya, who had left for Europe in March 1637, succeeded, through direct contact with the Spanish court, in persuading the king to grant the Indians, by *Cédula Real* of 21 May 1640, permission to equip themselves with firearms. Each reduction soon had a trained militia, armed with hackbuts. They proved their value almost immediately, because, shortly afterwards, some 450 *bandeirantes,* accompanied by 2,700 Tupís, descended the Río Uruguay in 300 *balsas*, with the intention of carrying out fresh razzias. The militias, comprising about 4,200 Indians and with the Indian captain Nicolás Ñeengirú as one of their commanders, surprised the intruders in March 1641 near the mouth of the Mbororé (in Uruguay). After skirmishes on land and on the water, this confrontation again resulted in a great victory for the Indians. The *Paulistas* lost 3,000 men, including many Tupí Indians. The Guaraníes captured 300 rafts and 400 hackbuts during the actions.

In the 1640s the arming of the Guaraní Indians really got under way. The villages which were situated south of the Río Yguazú and the Río Tebicuary in the region of the Paraná and Uruguay rivers were then all placed on a military footing. The permanently trained militias of mission Indians were regarded from that time by the Spanish Crown as a buffer in the Spanish-Portuguese border zone and as an armed force which, if possible, would be able to aid Spanish expansion. The Indians were also appreciated as such and, if necessary, were also deployed when the province of Paraguay was in danger. This happened, for example, in 1652 when an army of Paraguayans and armed Guaraníes (recruited by the Jesuits) once more defeated the Portuguese, who had again entered the province via el Guairá, divided into four large army units (including many Tupís), en route to the missions of the Paraná and the Uruguay. From 1656, the *bandeirantes* ceased their attacks, ushering in a period of peace that lasted until 1750. But many Indians died before this stage was reached. Charlevoix, cited by Lacombe, estimated that the *Paulistas* were responsible for the death or enslavement of over 100,000 Indians in the period 1629-41. Arango Vieira states that the whole conflict between *bandeirantes* and mission Indians during the life of the reductions claimed a total of some 100,000 victims (slaves and dead).[58]

The geographical effect of the Portuguese attacks was that the mission area of the Jesuits was greatly contracted. After the abandonment of el Guairá (1631-32), the Order also halted its activities in the region of the Río Yguazú-Acaray (1633) and the Uruguay-Tape region (1636-39); somewhat later, the fathers also withdrew from el Itatín. In el Guairá 13 villages were lost and two in the Yguazú-Acaray region, to be replaced by only three at other locations in the Paraná-Uruguay regions (San Ignacio Miní, Loreto and Santa María la Mayor). The 19 villages which were founded in the Uruguay region and the Sierra del Tape up to the mid-1630s (9 and

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[58] Arango Vieira 1941:324; Benítez 1985:109; Blumers 1992:28-9; Gandía 1936: 79; Lacombe 1955:302; Machuca Martínez 1951:21; McNaspy 1987:27-8; Maeder 1989:49,51; Meliá Lliteras 1991:221; Santos Hernández 1992:284; Sulmanas 1981:22-3.

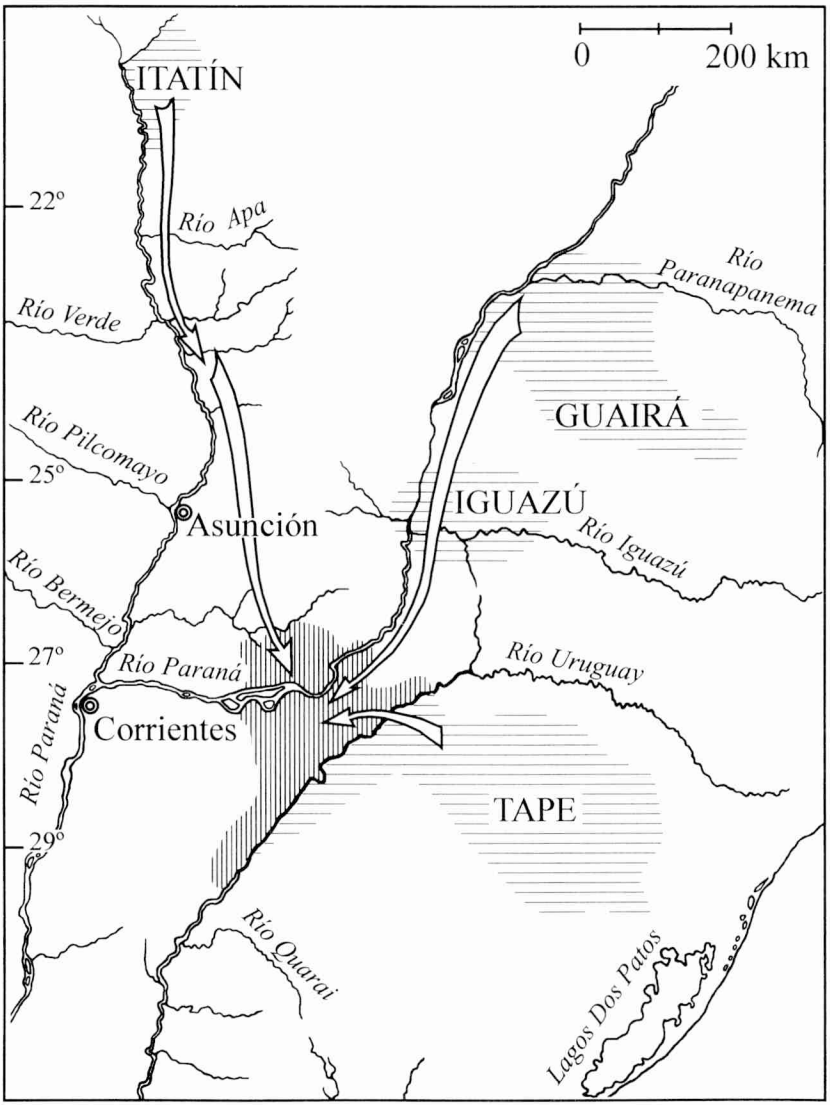

Fig. 6.4. The relocation and concentration of Jesuit missionary activities in the period 1631-40 (after Maeder 1989:68).

10, respectively) were reduced to 10 in number and were all situated west of the Uruguay.[59]

Of the total number of 48 missions which were established by the Jesuits among the Guaraníes during the period 1610-1635, 26 were eventually destroyed by the *Paulistas* and only 22 remained after 1641 (Table 6.1 and 6.2). Ten villages were situated at that time in the zone along both sides of the middle Paraná and 10 were situated in the area to the west of the Río Uruguay. These 20 villages housed about 40,000 inhabitants in 1652. The number of settlements totalled 22 if the two villages from el Itatín are added (together housing about 3,000 inhabitants). The number of 'immigrant' Guaraníes (i.e. who had moved out of the abandoned areas) in the 20 villages was greater than the 'Mesopotamian' natives.[60]

Of the 10 villages which were situated along both sides of the Paraná (i.e. in modern Paraguay and the modern Argentine province of Misiones) only 3 villages had actually originated in the region itself, i.e. San Ignacio del Paraná (or: Guazú), Encarnación de Itapúa and Corpus Christi. Of the seven other villages, two had inhabitants who had originated from el Guairá (San Ignacio del Yvaveviri - or Miní - and Loreto); two others had been relocated from the basin of the Ijuí (Candelaria and San Carlos), and the three others had originally been situated in the Sierra del Tape and the basin of the Ibicuy (Santa Ana, San José and San Cosme y Damián). After 1669, the year in which the Itatín reductions were moved south of the Tebicuary, 9 of the 12 villages had originated outside the region.

The same applies to the 10 villages situated to the west of the Río Uruguay. Here, too, only three villages had originated in the region itself, i.e. Concepción, Yapeyú and San Francisco Javier. The seven others were 'immigrant villages': Santa María la Mayor came from the Yguazú district; San Nicolás, Santos Mártires and Asunción del Mbororé (later called La Cruz) had been relocated from the basin of the Ijuí and the remaining three (Santo Tomé, San Miguel and Santos Apóstoles) had originally been situated on the Ybicuí and in the Sierra del Tape.

In total, therefore, 14 of the 20 villages in the Paraná-Uruguay region in around 1641 were 'foreign' villages. Of those 20, only 2

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59 Maeder 1989:49,51; Santos Hernández 1976:130.

60 Gutiérrez 1983:16; Santos Hernández 1976:150; Santos Hernández 1992:284.

were situated in what is now Paraguay (San Ignacio Guazú and Itapúa), while 18 were in territory that now forms part of northeast Argentina.

With regard to the political, administrative and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the situation at that time was not wholly clear. There had originally been differences of opinion about the jurisdiction over four villages which had been relocated from the Uruguay and Tape regions (Candelaria, Santa Ana, San Cosme y Damián and San José). They were regarded by the governor of Buenos Aires in 1647 as forming part of the *gobernación* of Río de la Plata, but were allocated to Paraguay by *Real Cédula* of 6 July 1700.[61] The boundaries of the two dioceses were settled in 1727 (see Chapter 3).

Fig. 6.4 gives a picture of the spatial concentration that took place in the years 1631-40. The spatial concentration had been completed by the end of the 1660s, when the mission settlements from el Itatín had also been rebuilt south of the Río Tebicuary. The field of operations then lay wholly in the northeast of Argentinean Mesopotamia and in the south of Eastern Paraguay, and contracted to about one third or a quarter of the area that had been occupied in the six mission regions in the period 1610-40. The area concerned was still a large one, however. It was situated farther away from São Paulo, could be better defended and had a good production potential.

The concentration was obviously by no means simple. The villages had to be completely rebuilt. Before that, the fathers often also had to overcome the opposition of the Indians who did not wish to leave their territory. The Indians of San Cosme y San Damián, Santa Ana, San José and San Nicolás, in particular, resisted relocation. After they had been persuaded to leave, the villages which they left were set on fire to prevent them trying to return to them.[62]

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61 Maeder 1989:52-3; Maeder & Gutiérrez 1994:8.

62 Maeder 1989:52.

Table 6.1. The 48 *pueblos de misiones* founded by the Jesuits in their mission province of Paraguay during the period 1610-35, by region (excluding the Chaco).

Region/name of village	Founded in	Principal founder(s)
El Guairá		
1 Nuestra Señora de Loreto I	1610	José Cataldino/Simón Maceta
2 San Ignacio de Ytaumbuzú	1610	José Cataldino/Simón Maceta
3 San Francisco Javier	1622	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya
4 Encarnación	1625	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya?
5 San José	1625	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya/Simón Maceta
6 San Miguel	1626	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya/ Cristóbal de Mendoza
7 San Pablo	1627	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya
8 San Antonio	1627	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya
9 San Pedro	1627	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya
10 Nuestra Señora de la Concepción de los Gualachos	1627	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya/ Francisco Díaz Taño
11 Siete Arcángeles	1627	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya?
12 San Tomé/Tomás	1628	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya or Francisco Díaz Taño
13 Jesús María	1628	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya
Paraná region		
1 San Ignacio Guazú (del Paraná)	1609	Marcial Lorenzana/Francisco de San Martín/Roque González de Santa Cruz
2 Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación de Itapúa	1615	Roque González de Santa Cruz/ Diego de Borroa
3 Santa Ana	1615	Roque González de Santa Cruz
4 Yaguapoa	1618	Roque González de Santa Cruz
5 Corpus Christi	1622	Pedro Romero/Diego de Borroa
6 San Ignacio Miní	1632	José Cataldino/Simón Maceta
7 Nuestra Señora de Loreto	1632	Antonio Ruiz de Montoya
Yguazú-Acaray region		
1 Nuestra Señora de la Natividad del Acaray	1624 (1619)	Diego de Borroa/Claudio Ruyer
2 Santa María la Mayor (del Yguazú)	1626	Diego de Borroa/Claudio Ruyer

Table 6.1. cont.

Region/name of village	Founded in	Principal founder(s)
Tape region		
1 Santa Teresa del Ivitiruno	1632/34	Pedro Romero
2 San Miguel	1632	Cristóbal de Mendoza/ Pablo Benavidez
3 San José	1632	José Cataldino/Manuel Berlat
4 San Tomé(Tomás)	1632/33	Luis Arnot/Manuel Berthod
5 Jesús María del Iviticaray	1632/33	?
6 Santa Ana del Igay	1632/33	Cristóbal de Mendoza/Pedro Romero
7 Natividad de Nuestra Señora	1632/33	?
8 San Cosme y San Damián	1633/34	Adriano Formoso
9 San Joaquín	1633/34	?
10 San Cristóbal	1634	?
Uruguay region		
1 Nuestra Señora de la Limpia Concepción	1620	Roque González de Santa Cruz
2 Santos Reyes de Yapeyú	1626	Pedro Romero
3 San Nicolás	1626	Roque González de Santa Cruz/ Manuel de Ampuero
4 Santa María la Mayor	1626?	Diego de Borroa/Claudio Ruyer
5 Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria	1627	Roque González de Santa Cruz/Pedro Romero
6 Santos Mártires del Caaró	1628	?
7 San Francisco Javier	1629	José Ordóñez
8 San Carlos del Caapí	1631	Pedro Molas/Felipe Viveros
9 Asunción del Acaraguá	1632	Pedro Romero/Cristóbal Altemirano
10 Santos Apóstoles Pedro y Pablo	1632/3	Diego de Alfaro
El Itatín		
a.original		
1. Ángeles de Tacuaty	1632	Diego Ferrer/Justo Mansilla
2. San José de Yacarey	1632	Diego Ferrer/Justo Mansilla?
3. San Benito de Yaray	1632	Diego Ferrer/Justo Mansilla?
4. Natividad de Taraquy	1632	Diego Ferrer/Justo Mansilla?
b. eventual		
1. San Ignacio de Caaguazú del Norte (Santiago)	1635	?
2. Nuestra Señora de Fe (de Taré) (Santa María de Fe/Aguaranambí)	1635	?/Manuel Berthod?

Sources: Text Chapter; Maeder & Gutierrez 1994:several places. See also Brunet 1976:370, Cannstatt 1905a:358-9. The various sources sometimes give different foundation years.

Table 6.2. The *pueblos de misiones* extant in 1641.

Paraná villages	Uruguay villages	Itatín villages
Native villages	**Native villages**	**Native villages**
1 San Ignacio Guazú	1 Concepción	1 Santiago
2 Encarnación de Itapúa	2 Yapeyú	2 Santa María de Fe
3 Corpus Christi	3 San Francisco Javier	
Relocated villages	**Relocated villages**	
4 San Ignacio Miní	4 Santa María la Mayor	
5 Loreto	5 San Nicolás	
6 Candelaria	6 Santos Mártires	
7 San Carlos	7 Asunción del Mbororé (La Cruz)	
8 Santa Ana	8 Santo Tomé	
9 San José	9 San Miguel	
10 San Cosme y San Damian*	10 Santos Apóstoles	

Source: Text Chapter.
* From 1638 to 1718 the inhabitants of San Cosme y Damian formed part of Candelaria, but they did have their own quarter.

A fresh start: the years 1641-85

From the 1640s, a completely new period opened in the history of the missionary work of the Jesuits. Maeder places that period from 1641 until c. 1685. According to the *Cartas Anuas* of 1641-43, all the threatened villages were then moved to the area between the rivers Paraná and Uruguay (now the Argentine province of Misiones) (Fig. 8.1). The number here remained stable from that time until population growth and the safety of the area made it desirable and possible to split certain villages in the years 1685-87. A new phase in the settlement history then began, which is discussed in Chapter 7.

An important objective in this period was to get all the existing settlements accommodated, insofar as was necessary, on favourable sites. This did not succeed immediately, which meant that the siting of the villages after relocation was not always the definitive one. Some had the good fortune to be established immediately on a

suitable site, but others had to be moved one or more times over a short distance.

Maeder gives as an example Candelaria, that was originally situated north of the Río Paraná, but was moved to a site south of the river between 1647 and 1649, before moving to its definitive site in 1665. Mártires 'made a pilgrimage' with part of his population in 1639 to look for a better site, but subsequently returned to the earlier location. The inhabitants of Santa Ana moved to the banks of the Uruguay, but because the area was low and unhealthy, they decided to move the settlement to the bank of the Paraná. Sanitary considerations (a better water supply or a somewhat pleasanter and healthier climate) generally played the most important role in the relocations, while the danger from floods was also a motive for relocation (as with Encarnación in 1703). Strategic considerations sometimes played a role, as in 1665, when it was decided to move Candelaria closer to the Paraná, so that it could function as a *puerto* and an obligatory river crossing. The removals to better sites detailed here generally took place over short distances. San Ignacio del Paraná, for example, was moved only a quarter of a *legua* (about 1 km) farther to the east (1668), and San Ignacio del Yaveviri was moved one and a half *leguas* to a somewhat higher site (1696).

A total of six villages within (Argentinean) Mesopotamia were relocated once. These were San Ignacio del Yaveviri (1696), Santa Ana (1660), San José (1660), Santa María la Mayor (probably 1644), Asunción del Mbororé (1657) and San Cosme y Damián (1718). Seven villages were moved two or more times to another site. Four of them belonged to the category of 'relocated villages': Loreto (1647-49 and 1686), Candelaria (1653 and 1665), San Miguel (1641 and 1687) and San Nicolás (1651 and 1687); three belonged to the group of 'villages founded in Mesopotamia': San Ignacio del Paraná (1628, 1667), Corpus (1647 and 1701) and Encarnación (1621, 1652 and 1703). The relocations were relatively easy at that time, because the villages were built of simple materials (clay, reeds, timber, straw and palm leaves).

Towards the end of the period 1641-85, it proved possible in a number of instances, thanks to the growth of the population, the greater security and the presence of more missionaries, to return villages to their old sites and even to found new ones. Areas which had first been abandoned were then repopulated. We return to this development in Chapters 7 and 8.

It also happened in Misiones that the population of a village declined steeply after the migration and that the village was merged with

another, without incidentally losing its name and without the population of the two settlements being merged. That was the case with the villages of San Nicolás and Apóstoles, which were merged in 1651. Each of the two villages then formed a quarter. Another example was San Cosme y San Damián, which was added to Candelaria in about 1674 because of its small population and consequently appeared, together with the latter, village in an inventory (*padrón*) of 1676. Asunción del Mbororé (La Cruz) provides the third example. It was situated alongside Yapeyú for some time, thus forming part of it, until the two were separated in 1657.[63]

The years after 1640 were also the period in which the internal organisation of the villages was consolidated, their economic basis was expanded and the conversion of the inhabitants was made more profound. The most important geographical development in the period 1641-85 was the gradual occupation of a large part of Argentinean Mesopotamia, that had been virtually uninhabited until that time. While all the villages until 1640 had been situated in the forests, in the subsequent period, about a quarter of them were located outside them. This meant an economic reorientation for the villages concerned, especially in the sense that stockbreeding became more important. Yapeyú acted here as *pueblo pionero*: *estancias* were created and large-scale *vaquerías* were organised to drive large numbers of wild cattle from areas farther south to the missions' *estancias*. This led the mission Indians into areas inhabited only by groups of nomadic and hostile Charrúas. In the other villages, the means of subsistence did not need to be adapted, but arable farming did become more intensive and more permanent, partly thanks to the introduction of more European implements. Illustrative of the intensification was the increasing cultivation of cotton and - at a later period - the planting of yerba groves. As stockbreeding developed, cattle and sheep could increasingly provide for needs which previously had to be met by hunting. The Indians (or rather some of them) also became more familiar in this period with a whole range of artisan activities, a development which incidentally had already started in the preceding period.

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63 Maeder 1989:53-4,62.

Thanks to the concentration of the villages in a smaller area, communications and, with them, the provision of services, became less difficult, while the concentration in a relatively homogeneous region also resulted in a greater uniformity. In this period, the settlements acquired stable physical structures and dimensions. More durable and better building materials (bricks, tiles) began to be used.[64]

> The great similarity, which was largely the result of the uniform village pattern, did not mean that there were no differences at all. Some villages were distinguished from the others because they performed special functions. San Ignacio del Paraná (the oldest mission in the Paraná region) was a halting place for travellers en route to Asunción, but also a place of banishment for rebellious Indians and for neophytes who had fled to the forests (*neofitos selvícolas*). Corpus functioned as an arrival and departure point for the Indians travelling to or returning from the natural *yerbales* along the Alto Paraná. Candelaria was already at that time the customary place of residence of the mission superiors and also served as a crossing place for the traffic between the left and right banks of the Paraná. Concepción was distinguished not only by its size, but also enjoyed the status of chief reduction of the Uruguay region. The fathers periodically met there and the *armería* (repair workshop for weapons) was also sited there. San Francisco Javier served as a lookout point (*atalaya*) for *Paulista* attacks, and periodical reconnaissances of the surrounding areas were also carried out from there in order to prevent invasions. Yapeyú was the most southerly reduction and had, as such, to prevent Charrúas carrying out attacks.[65]

The absence of razzias and other confrontations, the more stable food supply and the improved logistical support made possible by the improved communications led to a sustained growth of the population in the period 1641-82, despite the fact that the missions at that time were not wholly spared from epidemics. The population of the 22 villages increased from 36,190 inhabitants in 1641 to 43,753 in 1667 and 61,083 in 1682, not because - as previously -

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[64] Maeder 1997:3-4.

[65] Maeder 1989:55.

fresh neophytes were constantly being added to the reductions, but through natural increase. Some villages had as many as 5-7,000 inhabitants.[66]

Another change was that the cultural homogeneity of Guaraní society increased after 1640. The victory over the Portuguese at Mbororé in 1641 and the creation of militias equipped with firearms strengthened the self-awareness of the Guaraníes. They formed a permanent military force which protected the border areas of the Spanish colonial empire against Portuguese aggression and on which the colonial authorities could always rely if needed. Not all the Indian groups in Spanish America enjoyed that honour.[67]

Explanations for the success of the *pueblos de misiones*

Many of the settlements founded by the Jesuits had to be abandoned because of the aggression of the *bandeirantes*, but their settlement foundation and missionary work may nevertheless be regarded on balance as successful. This will further appear in the chapters dealing with the more recent foundations, the organisation of the mission villages and their economic activities. The Jesuits owed their success to a number of circumstances.

The principal favourable circumstance was probably that the Indians felt threatened by Portuguese and Spaniards, because the latter wished to exploit their labour through slavery or the system of *encomiendas de servicios personales*. It was an explicit aim of the Jesuits to keep the Indians out of the hands of the colonial population.[68] They succeeded in persuading the Indians that this would indeed happen. It was partly thanks to their generally good relations with the governors and the Spanish Crown that they succeeded in this. In other words, they did indeed do what they promised, which sometimes could not be said of the civil authorities and, even less often, of the Spaniards and Portuguese. That also

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66 Maeder & Gutiérrez 1994:8.
67 Maeder 1997:4.
68 Susnik 1984:7-8.

applied to their promise not to take away women and children. Only in the beginning was it not wholly possible to keep the Indians outside the system of personal services, because the Jesuits had to take into account already existing *encomiendas* in some villages. In these instances, however, they did succeed in ensuring that the Indians were spared the worst excesses.

It was an unfortunate fact that the mission settlements were at first unable to defend themselves sufficiently against the Portuguese raids, but they were able to do so after the lapse of several decades and the safety of the *pueblos de misiones* was considerably increased.

The creation of the mission posts was helped by the fact that the Guaraníes were not organised into states or federal alliances. If the fathers succeeded in persuading a *cacique* that it was good for him to settle with his people in an existing or projected mission village, the principal barriers had generally been overcome. It is very understandable, therefore, that the missionaries usually established the first contacts with the *caciques*. The Jesuits acknowledged their special position, made arrangements with them when founding a village and subsequently gave them various functions in the new mission villages. The *caciques* retained not only some of their old privileges and powers, but also received new ones under the Spanish legislation: the *vara* (stick; staff) as a sign of authority (*insignia de mando*), exemption from tribute and the title of *Don*. There was some opposition from the shamans, who saw their traditional position being undermined by the missionaries. They sometimes reacted with extreme hostility, so that the fathers had to protect the population against their vengeance after resettlement. But eventually the Indians regarded the Jesuits as more powerful 'shamans'.

Where necessary, the Jesuits also made propaganda by describing the advantages of life in the reductions. They gave gifts (simple, but also more valuable and useful ones, such as iron fishhooks, wedges and hoes), tried to build up a good contact with the children and sometimes ransomed children or others who had been enslaved. Once the Indians had come into the possession of certain iron utensils, these sometimes also had to be repaired. This made them more or less dependent on the Europeans' smithies. Where necessary, the Jesuits used their forges to attract Indians to use their

services. All in all, the iron utensils which were given in the beginning to the *caciques,* or to all the Indians, played an important role as a form of enticement and medium of exchange.[69]

In addition, the propaganda of the converted Guaraníes themselves was very important. As soon as a reduction had existed for some time and was becoming known, one or more converted *caciques* and other suitable Indians were sent out, accompanied by a missionary, to persuade other Indian groups to settle in a mission village. This strategy often succeeded. It is true that the converted Indians sometimes went about their task in a rather harsh manner. Certain practices which the Jesuits then applied also appear rather strange today. An example is the taking away of children, in the knowledge that the parents would come and fetch them and that this was an opportunity for persuading them to stay.[70]

Life in the *pueblos de misiones* (which were generally larger than the traditional settlements) had many new and unfamiliar sides, which increased their attraction. As soon as they were found to be favourably located, the villages were increasingly beautified and given better amenities, the houses were improved, new and other festivals were organised, etc.

An important material advantage of life in the missions was that the fathers took responsibility for providing a solid basis of subsistence. They reasoned that Indians who suffered lack would not be prepared to go on living in a mission village, but would leave it to go hunting, fishing and gathering. The Jesuits therefore expanded arable farming to ensure that sufficient food crops were produced, aimed at a generous and regular meat supply (thus obviating the need to depend on hunting and fishing), distributed yerba and tobacco and provided the Indians with clothing and other necessities. They acted to the best of their ability in dealing with sickness. As the Jesuits gained more experience, the village economy and society functioned increasingly well and with greater efficiency.

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69 Palacios & Zoffoli 1991:191.

70 For the *Métodos de Agrupamiento,* see, *inter alia*: Palacios & Zoffoli 1991: 128-30.

What was important in this connection is that the mission villages were situated in a region that was very suitable for arable farming and stockbreeding and that the fathers were dealing with Indian groups who were already familiar with arable farming and a largely sedentary existence. The latter is borne out by the fact that their missionary work among the nomadic Chaco Indians was much less successful.

The basis of material subsistence was largely ensured by communal production. What was produced in this manner did not disappear into the fathers' pockets, but was used to meet the needs of the community and its members. The fruits of production were used, more specifically, to maintain the sick, elderly and other non-producers and to alleviate food shortages in the households; part was sold to enable other goods to be acquired for the community, and the remaining part was used to support other villages or retained as a reserve. In other words, the Indians received something - even a lot - back for the communally performed labour. There was reciprocity and this was a very important condition for the Guaraníes to be content with life in a mission village.[71]

Other important factors were that the missionaries were permanently present in the villages, not only when they were founded, but also afterwards, and were able to exercise their organisational talent, that they were able to concern themselves intensively with everything that happened in the village, and that each of them had special expertise in the field of agriculture and one or more trades. Their selection was rigorous: only 1 out of 10 Jesuits was selected for the missions.[72] As a result, the fathers built up a good reputation among the Indians, who approached them with respect and trust and regarded the fathers as their highest religious and political leaders.[73] That respect was incidentally mutual. The Jesuits treated the Indians with considerably more respect than the Spaniards or

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[71] Garavaglia 1987b:153; Necker 1990:193 *et seq.*

[72] McNaspy 1987:21.

[73] McNaspy (1987:36) illustrates the esteem for the missionaries in his statement that fathers had never been killed in the villages; while 26 died outside them through violence on the part of the Indians when the first contacts were made or because of aggression by the *bandeirantes*.

Portuguese. A number of missionaries had been born and bred in Spanish America and there were also mestizoes among them. Irrespective of their origin, however, they all spoke Guaraní and this brought them close to the indigenous population.

Life in the *pueblos de misiones* meant change, but it also meant that much that was familiar remained. The Jesuits tried in various ways to find links with the culture of the Guaraníes and took advantage of existing traditions (such as the role of the *caciques*, and the communal organisation of work). The most important factor here was undoubtedly that the missionaries used the Guaraní language; Spanish was hardly spoken in the missions. The fathers also tried to make links with the indigenous religion by deliberately maintaining and integrating certain elements of it. The latter was certainly not unimportant, because religion played an important role in Guaraní life. Their religion was their *máximo valor cultural*. Their inclination towards the religious made them receptive to Christianity and, in the mission settlements, that was offered to them. The transition to Christianity was in some respects not a great one: the Guaraníes were monotheists; they believed in a God with two sons (the moon and the sun); they also believed in an immortal soul and in a nirvana or paradise.[74]

After 1640, increasing justice was also done to the Guaraníes' qualities as warriors. The mission villages were expected to protect the border areas with their armed militias against the expansion pressure of the Portuguese. In 1649, the mission Indians were explicitly granted the status of free vassals and border garrison by the king, which greatly increased their feeling of self-esteem.[75] They regarded the Jesuits who helped them to organise the defences as the direct representatives of their king.

In view of all this, it is not surprising that there were also groups of Indians who sought out the missions wholly voluntarily, especially in times of want and danger.

We should not omit to mention that the Jesuits derived much benefit from the experience which had been gained by the Francis-

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[74] Meliá Lliteras 1991:215; Plá 1963:138.

[75] Blumers 1992:45: Plá 1963:138.

cans from about 1580 in the establishment of *pueblos de indios*. A reduction like San José de Caazapá served largely as a model for the foundation of the first *pueblos de misiones*. Necker has explicitly pointed out that the Jesuits learned much from the Franciscans, more than from their work in Julí. Both types of villages, in fact, showed many similarities, as we shall show elsewhere in this study (especially in Chapter 10).[76]

The Spanish military, by contrast, played no significant role in the success story of the Jesuit foundations. The fathers did not allow themselves to be accompanied by Spanish soldiers in order to compel submission and resettlement by force; that would only have generated mistrust and worked counterproductively. Nor did they wish to have any Spaniards in or near the missions. The missionaries allowed themselves to be accompanied at most by converted Indians in establishing the first contacts with the natives (usually the *caciques*). They tried to operate not only without soldiers, but also without material support from the Spaniards. When there were other, older mission villages in the neighbourhood, however, use was made of them, because they could provide support at the founding stage by making up food shortages, by lending out artisans or by sending other workers who could assist in building or beautifying the new settlement.[77] Sometimes, a contingent of converted and experienced Indians from an older village settled permanently in a new village, in order to provide support and serve as an example.

In exceptional cases, the Spaniards sometimes offered some support by making available some livestock, food, building workers or soldiers to protect the fathers and Indians against other aggressive indigenous groups. Some 200 Spaniards helped, for example, in 1743, in the building of Father Baucke's settlement of San Javier under the missionary's direction and together with the Indians (See Chapter 8). They also built a palisade around the village. This kind of support was given, however, not so much because the Spaniards saw it as their religious duty to cooperate with the missionary

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[76] Necker 1990:119,205-16.

[77] Fassbinder 1926:20,22.

activity, but much more because they no longer wanted to be plagued by the resistance and plundering of the Indians and hoped that concentration in a mission settlement would provide an effective remedy. They also hoped that the Jesuit missions would form a buffer against the attacks of other indigenous groups. As soon as these goals appeared to have been achieved, the Spaniards' interest in the mission villages often disappeared, certainly if they found that they could not benefit from the labour present there. A new settlement was very occasionally also supported by one or more Spanish traders, who supplied some seeds, implements, livestock and other necessities in the hope of finding a market and a reservoir of cheap labour in the mission settlement.[78] In general, however, the Jesuits had little or nothing to expect from the Spanish citizens, who were not the least pleased with the fact that the Jesuits withdrew increasing numbers of Indians from their labour reserve.

The role of the Spanish governors - the direct representatives of the Spanish Crown - was generally positive. Some (like Hernandarias) gave the fathers active support in carrying out their missionary task, others adopted a more passive attitude: they esteemed the Jesuits, accepted the status which they had obtained from the highest authority and profited, where necessary, from their presence (for example by involving them in defence). A small number of governors disliked the missionaries. The *cabildantes* of Asunción and other places had obviously many more reservations towards the Order, but they were largely Spaniards, who would have preferred to bring the Indians under control themselves through the *encomienda* system. Their economic self-interest was often directly opposed to the aims of the Order.

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[78] Konetzke 1960:234-5; Otruba 1956:127,129.

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Settlement in the seventeenth century outside the Jesuits' province

It was not only the mission villages of the Jesuits that suffered from the Portuguese attacks, the Spanish settlements were not safe either. As we have seen, Villa Rica had to be relocated and Ciudad Real and Santiago de Jerez had to be abandoned. But that was not the end of the story. Various *pueblos de indios* were not able to remain at their original locations either. Overall, the territory controlled by the Spaniards in the seventeenth century had greatly contracted. Many fewer new settlements were created or consolidated than in the period 1554-1593. This chapter gives a picture of how the Spanish population in the seventeenth century fared in the area of settlement and colonisation.

Some new Spanish settlements: Luque, Capiatá and Piribebuy

In the first half of the seventeenth century, the basis was laid in the region of Asunción for a few small new settlements, namely, Luque, Capiatá and Piribebuy (see Table 9.1).

Luque - the former Jukyty (Salinares) - was also called a *pueblo capillero*, because it arose around the chapel of Nuestra Señora de la Concepción. According to verbal information obtained by Azara, Don Miguel Antonio de Luque and his wife, the first colonists in the region, were granted permission by Bishop Cárdenas in 1635, during the governorship of Martín Ledesma de Valderrama, to build a pilgrimage chapel (*ermita*) on their land. Habitations gradually grew up around it, together with some amenities. The chapel

also served the scattered local population. By the end of the seventeenth century, Luque had become a sub-parish of the cathedral of Asunción. According to Gónzalez Torres, however, the information is not unequivocal, because some authors state that the foundation was performed by Governor Luis de Céspedes García Xería (1628-31), or that it did not take place not until 1750, when the chapel of San Francisco was built in the Valle del Luque, previously *Valle de las Salinas* (Valley of the Salt Pans). Governor Pedro Melo de Portugal was said not to have settled the administrative organisation until 1781.[1]

The foundation of Capiatá is attributed by some authors to - Ledesma, in 1640, but Gutiérrez writes that Bishop Cárdenas commissioned presbyter Pedro Mendoza in 1642 to build a church or chapel for the new settlement which Governor Gregorio de Hinestrosa (1641-47) had ordered to be founded. In any event, there was a chapel in existence in 1688. According to Gutiérrez, Capiatá is an example of a combined effort by a governor and a bishop to provide a densely populated part of the countryside with a chapel. Some amenities gradually arose around it and settlement became denser. Capiatá did not become an independent parish until the late eighteenth century.[2]

Gutiérrez remarks of Piribebuy that the majority of authors believe that this settlement dates from the same period as Capiatá and that it was founded in 1640 by Governor Pedro Lugo de Navarra (1636-41). He does not regard this as impossible, but observes that the settlement did not receive the status of parish until 1740 and that the first parish registers date from 1744. In my view, this may point to a slow growth of settlement around the core.[3]

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1 González Torres 1995:140; Gutiérrez 1983: 314; Velilla 1961.

2 Azara 1990:227; Gutiérrez 1983:30,315.

3 Gutiérrez 1983:315. According to some sources, Piribebuy had been founded earlier, and 8 March 1636 is accepted as the foundation date (González Torres 1995:157).

Concentration of settlement

In the second half of the seventeenth century - besides those just named - a few other settlements arose in the Asunción region. These were not completely new villages, however, but settlements which were relocated from the northern regions to the south. The relocation was a consequence of the fact that the frequent attacks by the Portuguese, *mamelucos* and Chaco Indians (Payaguáes and Mbayáes) made settlement in the more northerly parts of *Paraguay Oriental* increasingly unsafe. The hope was that, by relocating the settlements, not only would they be easier to defend, but also that their presence in the *comarca* of Asunción would increase the safety of the capital and its environs.

In around 1660 there were about a dozen indigenous settlements in the region north of Asunción (see Table 7.1). One cluster was formed by Arecayá (on the Río Jejuy and one of the 'obligatory' mooring places for *balsas* coming from the region of Mbaracayú), San Francisco de Atyrá (between the Jejuy and the Ypané), Todos los Santos de Guarambaré and San Pedro del Ypané (both Petín or Pety reductions near the Río Ypané) (Fig. 5.2) There were, further, the two Itatín reductions of the Jesuits: San Ignacio de Caaguazú and Aguaranambí (Fig. 6.3). Farther to the south, on the Yhagüy (probably close to where it flowed into the Río Manduvirá) in the extreme north of la Cordillera, and fortified since 1667, lay the village of Nuestra Señora de la Limpia Concepción de Tobatí. The Christian Indians of the village of San Lorenzo de los Altos lived a little way north of the lagoon of Tapaycuá, and to the east was the reduction of San Benito de los Yois, which had greatly declined in population and was inhabited by Ñuara Indians who had been taken along when Santiago de Jerez was abandoned. Last, but not least, in around 1660, there was the Spanish settlement of Villa Rica with four *encomienda* villages in its vicinity (nos. 1-4 in Table 7.1).[4]

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[4] Garavaglia 1983:130; Velázquez 1995 (=1965):220.

Table 7.1. The 25 *pueblos de indios/misiones* extant in 1662 in the province of Paraguay, according to a return by Governor Alonso Sarmiento de Sotomayor y Figueroa.[5]

Under secular priests	Under Jesuits
1 Nuestra Señora de Candelaria	1 Nuestra Señora de Fee (Santa María de Fee)
2 San Andrés de Mbaracayú	2 San Ignacio de Caaguazú (Santiago)
3 San Pedro de Terecañy	3 San Ignacio del Paraguay (San Ignacio Guazú)
4 San Francisco de Ybyra-pariyara	4 Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación de Itapúa
5 San Pedro de Atyrá	5 Nuestra Señora de Loreto
6 Todos Santos de Guarambaré	6 San Ignacio de Yabebyry (San Ignacio Miní)
7 San Pedro de Ypané	7 Corpus Christi
8 Nuestra Señora Limpia Concepción de Tobatí	8 Nuestra Señora de Candelaria
9 San Benito de los Yois	9 San Cosme y Damián
10 San Lorenzo de los Altos	10 Santa Ana
11 San Buenaventura de Yaguarón	11 San José

Under Franciscans

1 San Blas del Itá
2 San José de Caazapá
3 San Francisco de Yuty

Source: Velázquez 1995 (=1972):560.

Arecayá was the first settlement to be founded at a more southerly location, but not before a whole series of incidents. The rebellious behaviour of the indigenous population of this settlement led Governor Alonso Sarmiento de Sotomayor y Figueroa to have the inhabitants subjected to harsh punishment at the end of 1660. Part of the population were killed and he divided the remaining Indians as serfs

[5] The 11 villages under control of the secular priests were served by 9 priests, because San Francisco de Ybyrapariyara did not have its own priest, but was served from San Pedro de Terecañy, while Todos Santos de Guarambaré received pastoral care from San Pedro de Atyrá. In 1662, the four last-named *pueblos de misiones* of the Jesuits had only recently come under the jurisdiction of the province of Paraguay, thanks to a decision taken by the former Governor Juan Blásquez de Valverde (1656-59) in his capacity as *visitador* (Velázquez 1995 = 1972:560).

among the people who had suffered under their resistance. This put an end to one of the most serious Indian risings. The drawback to this ill-considered liquidation of the strategically situated Arecayá was that the mouth of the Río Jejuy was no longer guarded and the river and its tributaries were subsequently exposed to groups of highly mobile and warlike Payaguáes. When the harsh penalties were condemned by the *Real y Supremo Consejo de las Indias* in 1670 as unjust and measures had to be taken to undo the injustice, this was in fact no longer possible. The old location had become too unsafe, especially after Atyrá, Ypané and Guarambaré had been relocated and so had disappeared from the north (see below). The whole area north of the Río Jejuy had been depopulated and had fallen into the hands of '*bárbaros del Chaco*'. The remaining inhabitants of Arecayá were therefore first settled at a site less than two *leguas* from the capital, in the vicinity of what is now Limpio, where they had no *dehesas* or *montes* and their small farms were hemmed in by the *chacras* of the *Asunceños*. Life was very difficult for them there. Governor Felipe Rege Corvalán (1676-81) therefore decided - in conformity with the royal decree of 23 October 1675 - that the remaining population of Arecayá should be merged with that of the village of San Lorenzo de los Altos. The decision was implemented on 7 November 1677 and Arecayá (with 90 very small households) permanently disappeared as a settlement from the map. Partly in consequence, Altos had a population of 874 souls in 1682.[6]

The depopulation of the north continued when the authorities agreed to a proposal to move the two Itatín reductions of San Ignacio de Caaguazú and Santa María de Fe to the mission region south of the Tebicuary and this was effected, as we have stated, in 1668-69.

Shortly after the relocation of the two missions, the three other villages which still survived in el Ypané (north of the Jejuy) after the destruction of Arecayá - Atyrá, Guarambaré and Ypané - disappeared. They were attacked in 1672-73 by Payaguáes and Mbayáes,

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[6] Azara 1990:217; Benítez 1985:12; Ministerio 1987:39: Velázquez 1995 (=1965):250-1.

plundered and set on fire or destroyed. In Atyrá 80 Indians and a priest were killed in the process.

The three villages were first moved 25 *leguas* to the south and given sites near Villa Rica (that was then situated on the Curuguaty) but, by as early as 22 February 1674, Governor Felipe Rege Corvalán compelled the inhabitants of Atyrá to move a further 50 *leguas* farther south, bringing the village to a site about 60 km from the capital, in la Cordillera, within the sphere of influence of Asunción. The population of San Benito de los Yois, which comprised no more than about 20 households (perhaps 60 persons), was added to it. As a result, San Benito de los Yois ceased to exist. Ypané and Guarambaré were also moved closer to the capital. The king granted his approval to this by *Cédula Real* of 25 July 1679, after which, Governor Diez de Andino decided on 6 May 1682 that the two villages should be sited on the edge of the plain of Guarnipitán, about 30 km southeast of the capital. According to González Torres, 16 May 1682 is accepted as the official date of refoundation for Guarambaré; that for Ypané is not known. The Spaniards who occupied land at these new locations and were destined to lose it would be compensated. The sites allocated at that time were the definitive ones; the villages still occupy them.[7]

The depopulation of the north of Eastern Paraguay was completed in 1676. That year was a complete disaster year, because 108 Portuguese and *mamelucos* from São Paulo, led by Francisco Pedroso Xavier and accompanied by 500 Tupí Indians, organised into three *bandeiras* and equipped with firearms, descended on the region of Mbaracayú.[8] On 14 February 1676, they opened the attack on the four *pueblos de indios* near Villa Rica. They attacked San Pedro de Terecañy and, on the following day, occupied San Francisco de Ybyrapariyara and Candelaria; and later also San Andrés de Mbaracayú. The inhabitants were carried off to Brazil. The inhabitants of Villa Rica also had to leave their settlement. They not only had to surrender their Indians, but also their *yerbales*

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[7] Azara 1990:220; Garavaglia 1983:133; González Torres 1995:120; Maeder & Gutiérrez 1994:88; Velázquez 1995 (=1972):563.

[8] Morínigo 1990:131. Cáceres Zorrilla (1962:31) refers to about 1,000 *bandeirantes* and 2,000 Indians.

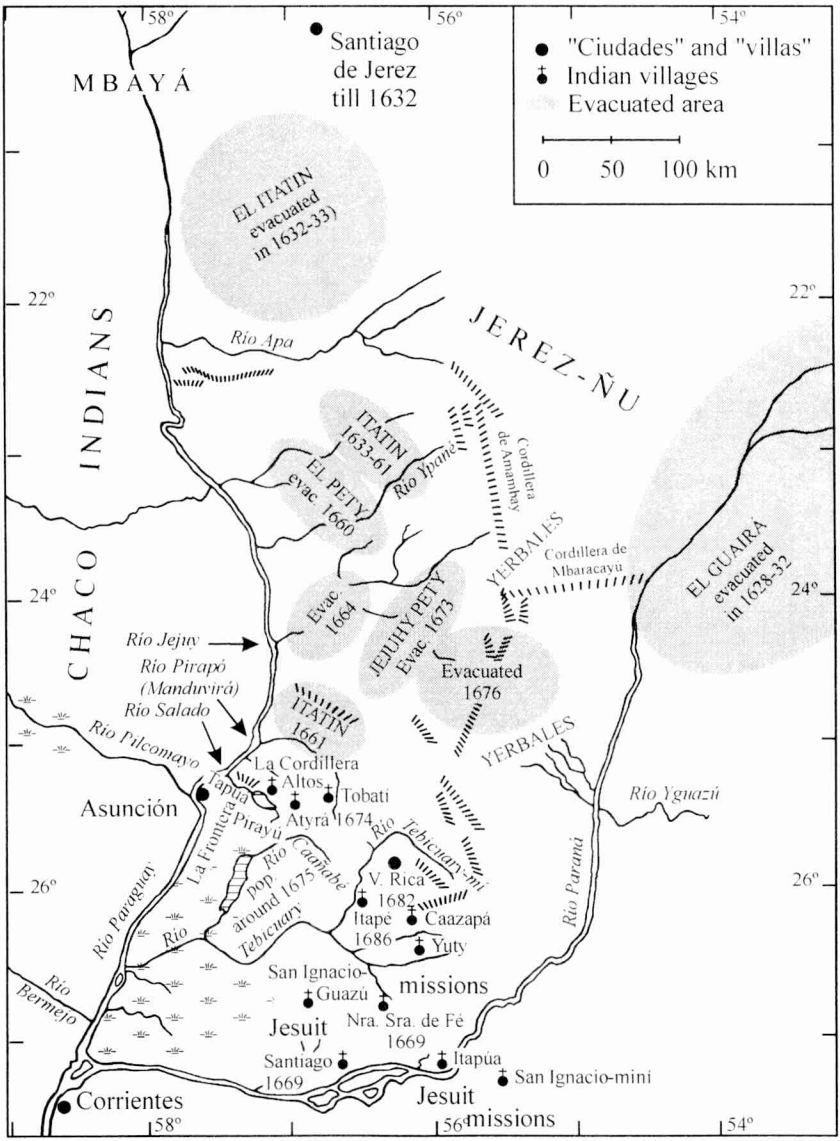

Fig. 7.1. Depopulated and still occupied areas in *Paraguay Oriental*, in about 1685 (after Velázquez 1995 = 1972:569).

(see Chapter 25). The *Villarriqueños* withdrew into the vicinity of the capital with a small number of local Indians whom they had managed to keep out of the razzia.[9] According to Susnik, the Indians concerned were some Guaraníes from the village of Candelaria who happened to be with them at the time. Seventy Indians from Ybyrapariyara were incorporated into the village of San Benito de los Yois (or: new Atyrá). Susnik believes that the majority of the Guaraníes went voluntarily with the *bandeirantes*, because they hoped that this would free them from their miserable existence as yerba labourers. Garavaglia states that the *bandeirantes* had free play in a certain sense, because many inhabitants of Villa Rica and the Mbaracayú villages were away collecting yerba and those who were left behind could hardly defend the settlements.[10] Governor Felipe Rege Corvalán was slow to react and was subsequently found guilty of inadequate defence. Thanks to the intervention of the *cabildo* of Asunción, who sent out a punishment expedition of some 400 Spaniards and 700 Indians under the command of Juan Diez de Andino, the Paraguayans finally succeeded in inflicting serious losses on the Portuguese, although they did not manage to retrieve the many hundreds of Indians who had already been carried off. The four Indian villages disappeared from the map and the Mbaracayú region in fact became depopulated. The disappearance of the settlements (and a number of smaller *postas* along the Jejuy) meant that all the support points for the collection of yerba, its shipment and the provisioning of the work camps had gone. This left the *yerbales* of northeastern Paraguay very difficult of access for half a century from 1676.[11]

The outcome of these events was that, in the period 1660-76 - i.e a period of about 15 years - all the land north of the Río Jejuy had been abandoned by the Spaniards and Guaraníes (insofar as the Indians had not been taken prisoner). The last support point north of the Río Manduvirá (then called the Río Pirapó) also disappeared

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9 Cáceres Zorrilla 1962:31: Garavaglia 1983:134; Morínigo 1990:131; Velázquez 1995 (= 1972): 564.

10 Garavaglia 1983:296; Susnik 1965:195.

11 Cardozo 1991:207; Cardozo 1994:36; Garavaglia 1983:426.

at the end of the seventeenth century through the relocation of Tobatí to its present site in 1699. It was impossible for the population beyond the Manduvirá to resist the constant attacks of the merciless Mbayáes any longer.[12] A century after the evangelisation by the Franciscan Fathers Luis Bolaños and Alonso de San Buenaventura, the region north of the Río Manduvirá had been completely abandoned and become depopulated, as had happened earlier with el Guairá.

The relocations gave the Mbayáes the opportunity to occupy the depopulated area. From the beginning of the 1670s, they started to settle increasingly east of the Paraguay. They eventually brought the whole area north and south of the Río Apa as far as the Río Jejuy under their control. They joined the Payaguáes and other Chaco groups who were already threatening the Spanish population and the villages of converted Indians (Guarambarenses and Tobatines) situated to the north from the end of the sixteenth century. The Mbayáes contributed to their disappearance and subsequently resisted for a long time the repopulation of the north.[13]

From 1676, the populated area falling effectively (but not wholly stably) under Spanish authority extended from the rivers Manduvirá and Piribebuy, north and east of the city, to the Río Tebicuary in the south. Here the Creoles and mestizoes, together with a small number of Guaraníes, largely concentrated in *pueblos de indios,* had to try to survive.[14] South of the Tebicuary-Yguazú line lay the *pueblos de misiones*, controlled by the Jesuits, but these were a world apart. They occupied only a small part of the territory - principally the southeast.

The depopulation incidentally did not mean that the Paraguayans abandoned the areas completely. They remained on the alert for renewed infiltrations and rightly so, because the Portuguese reappeared on the scene in 1685. Accordingly, inspection tours were organised each year from Asunción and any Portuguese who were encountered were ordered to leave. In 1688, Francisco de Monforte

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[12] González Torres 1995:176; Velázquez 1986:175.

[13] Morínigo 1989:131.

[14] Garavaglia 1983:138.

removed them from the area around the destroyed village of Santiago de Jerez, where they were trying to settle along the Río Mbotetey. Shortly afterwards, however, the *mamelucos* reappeared in this area. The Portuguese eventually found it more sensible to cease their aggression in the direction of Asunción, partly because there was insufficient booty to be had there. They shifted their activities more to the north of the province (to what is now Mato Grosso do Sul; see Chapter 9), looking for precious metals and gemstones.

Nor was life in the area in and around Asunción without its problems in the seventeenth century. The final decades of that century were, in fact, a disastrous period. The Payaguáes (who were skilled canoeists) caused regular trouble. A Payaguá attack could happen at any time (especially at night and in the countryside), often resulting in deaths and the plundering of anything, including cattle, farm produce and canoes from the port of Asunción or other places on the river. Women and children were sometimes also carried off. There might also be attacks from other groups of Chaco Indians who crossed the river from time to time. The population of the Asunción region was repeatedly threatened from the north by Mbayáes (who were horsemen). The Mbayáes incidentally also roamed around in the Chaco opposite Asunción and were liable to launch attacks from there. In 1671, for example, 500 Mbayáes crossed the river and went on the rampage for a year in the zone of Lambaré, Tacumbú and the valley of Tapuá (now: Limpio), killing over 100 Creoles and Guaraní Indians.[15]

In 1678 Governor Rege de Corvalán took severe reprisals against the Guaycurúes, killing about 600 warriors. As a result, this indigenous population group was finally eliminated as an enemy to be reckoned with.[16] But the Payaguáes and the Mbayaés operating from the north had not yet been eliminated. Between 1687 and 1698, over 2,000 warriors attacked the scarce population in la Cordillera. They destroyed *chacras*, set houses on fire, killed people, seized cattle, horses and other livestock, and stole items

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[15] Ganson: 1989:95; Morínigo 1990:131; Velázquez 1977:31.

[16] Velázquez 1995 (=1972):564.

such as axes, machetes and other metal objects.[17] The Mbayáes and Monteses (non-acculturated Guaraníes) held up the permanent occupation of the fertile valleys of la Cordillera and its environs for arable farming and stockbreeding. The navigation on the Río Paraguay also suffered repeatedly from the attacks of the Indians - in this instance, mainly the Payaguáes. Punishment expeditions were organised with due regularity, but without lasting success. Manuel Domínguez mentions 35 *entradas* into the Chaco between 1601 and 1700, but his list is certainly incomplete.[18]

The building of protective forts and other defensive measures

Apart from carrying out punishment expeditions and increasing the number of settlements in the immediate surroundings of Asunción - i.e. concentrating the population - the Creoles, mestizoes and converted Guaraníes also tried to increase their security by strengthening the defences. At that time - according to Garavaglia - there was a militarisation of the *campesino* population. They were called up more frequently than ever to serve in the militias.[19] Besides the mobile militias, more permanent defensive points were built along the Paraguay: *fuertes, castillos, presidios* (so called because the fortifications sometimes also served as prisons) and *fortines*. The fortifications were built at strategic points along the Río Paraguay and at the entrances to valleys used by the Indians as approach routes. Some were therefore situated close to the rivers, others somewhat farther away.

> The *fuertes* or *castillos* were real forts, but one must not form an exaggerated impression of a *presidio* or *fortín*. It was no more than a wooden *rancho* or *choza* (cabin, hut) with a roof of straw or palm branches, and in which militiamen could sleep and containing a small cannon. There was only a limited stock of other weapons. The structure was surrounded by a simple palisade. Militiamen kept guard there

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[17] Ganson 1989:103.

[18] Cited by Velázquez 1977:36.

[19] Garavaglia 1983:140.